

# THE STORY OF THE COUP D'ÉTAT

BY M. DE MAUPAS.

(FORMER MINISTÈR)

*FREELY TRANSLATED, WITH NOTES/ BY*

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IN TWO VOLUMES  
VOL. II.

LONDON

J. S. VIRTUE & CO., LIMITED, 26, IVY LANE  
PATERNOSTER ROW

1884

**LONDON :**

**PRINTED BY J S. VIRTUE AND CO , LIMITED.  
CITY ROAD.**

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ments and ignorant of everything that was going on.\*

The occupation of the Assembly had been one of those details on which our attention had dwelt with the greatest minuteness. We, General de Saint-Arnaud and I, had on different occasions examined on the spot and at night the conditions, visible from the exterior, under which the Palace was being guarded; we had studied the most propitious hour to penetrate to it—half-past five was the time. The way for a military force to get access to it was this: if the colonel of the regiment, a battalion of which occupied the Palace, felt disposed to second our projects, he could when once within force the soldiers and the officers to yield to his authority, take the command himself, have himself escorted by the remainder of his regiment, and most efficiently hold the position. He might then execute our instructions, namely, favour instead of oppose, as the ordinary guard of the Chamber would inevitably have done, the arrest of the two quæstors, and prevent the representatives once they got wind of the matter from assembling in their official meeting place. It was expedient therefore to select, during the week of

\* M. Baze and General Le Flô were both, in their capacity of quæstors, lodged in the Palais-Bourbon

the 2nd December, the guard of the Palace from a regiment whose colonel was absolutely devoted to us. General de Saint-Arnaud had personal reasons for counting upon Colonel Espinasse; accordingly his regiment, the 42nd of the line, was chosen for duty that week at the Palais-Bourbon.

Colonel Espinasse had been advised by General de Saint-Arnaud to be ready each night to answer to his call. At three o'clock on the morning of the 2nd December he was summoned to the Ministry of War, he received his orders, and, like the brave soldier he was, he effusively thanked his chief, also his friend, for the proof of affection he had shown him.

At a quarter to six Colonel Espinasse entered, alone first, the Palace.\* He gave his orders and was soon followed by that part of his regiment which had remained without until his assumption of command. At six o'clock he had the doors of the Palace opened to the two commissaries of police, and gave to every sentry the instructions and the password he himself had received. The first part of his mission had been punctually executed.

\* We had noticed, General de Saint-Arnaud and I, that the gate of the Palais-Bourbon, which was closed at night, remained ajar every morning from five o'clock. It was one difficulty less for Colonel Espinasse, who got into the Palace by that gate.

President Dupin slept tranquilly ; if we had not his co-operation, there was no fear of his hostility. As for the quæstors, no noise had troubled their sleep, only the two commissaries in penetrating to their apartments had disturbed their slumbers, but there was no longer aught to fear from their orders and their authority. At this hour we were the masters, and they no longer were.

The occupation of the Palace of the Assembly was the first news that reached the Prefecture of Police. It came at six o'clock, at the very moment that Colonel de Bévillè and M. de Saint-Georges brought me the decrees and proclamations printed during the night. Everything had been executed with the utmost precision at the national printing works. Colonel de Bévillè had acquitted himself of his important mission with his customary devotion and ability. The Prince in reserving it to him knew how much he deserved this confidence. A few moments later the documents were distributed amongst the men, conveyances were waiting for them, and they started for every quarter of Paris and the suburban communes. At half-past seven the work of placarding was finished in Paris, between eight and half-past in the outskirts.

In what words were the resolutions of Louis

Napoleon, the event of the 2nd December, made known to France? Such documents do not bear analysis, history claims them in their entirety; we therefore transcribe textually the placards which informed Paris first and a few hours later every town and commune in France of the heroic act which delivered the country from the terrible perils of 1852.

The first document was the Decree of Louis Napoleon, pronouncing the dissolution of the National Assembly, the dissolution of the Council of State, and the repeal of the law of the 31st May. It also announced the forthcoming elections and the proclamation of the state of siege.

The decree ran as follows:—

“In the Name of the French People, the President of the Republic decrees;

“(Art. 1.) The National Assembly is dissolved.

“(Art. 2.) Universal suffrage is re-established. The law of the 31st May is repealed.

“(Art. 3.) The French people are convoked in their constituencies from the 14th December to the 21st December following.

“(Art. 4.) The state of siege is decreed throughout the first military division.

"(Art. 5.) The Minister of the Interior is charged with the execution of this decree.

"Given at the Palace of the Elysée, the 2nd December, 1851.

"LOUIS NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.

"The Minister of the Interior,

"DE MORNY."

Then came the proclamation of the Prince—his appeal to the people. The following is the text :—

"FRENCHMEN !

"The present situation cannot last much longer. Each day aggravates the dangers of the country. The Assembly which should be the firmest support of order has become a hotbed of conspiracy. The patriotism of three hundred of its members has been unable to arrest its fatal tendencies. Instead of framing laws for the public welfare it forges arms for civil war, it attacks the power I hold directly from the nation, it encourages every evil passion, it compromises the tranquillity of France ; I have dissolved it, and I call upon the whole of the people to judge between us.

"The Constitution was, as you know, calculated beforehand to weaken the power you confided to me. Six millions of suffrages were a signal protest against this Constitution, nevertheless I have faith-

fully adhered to it. Provocations, calumnies, insults failed to move me. But to-day, when the fundamental pact is no longer respected even by those who incessantly invoke it, and when the men who have already caused the downfall of two monarchies wish to tie my hands in order to overthrow the Republic, my duty is to frustrate their perfidious designs, to maintain the Republic, and to save the country by invoking the solemn judgment of the only sovereign I acknowledge in France—the people.

“I make a loyal appeal therefore to the whole of the nation, and I say to her: If you wish to perpetuate this state of anxiety which degrades us and compromises our future, choose another in my place, for I will have no more of a power which is powerless to do good, which holds me responsible for acts I cannot prevent, and chains me to the helm when I see the vessel running headlong to destruction.

“If, on the contrary, you have still confidence in me, provide me with the means of accomplishing the great mission I hold at your hands.

“This mission consists in closing the era of revolutions, in satisfying the legitimate necessities of the people, and in protecting her against subversive passions.

“Above all does it consist in creating institutions which will survive individuals, and which may prove the foundations on which to build something stable.

“Convinced that the instability of power and the preponderance of a single Assembly are the permanent causes of trouble and discord, I submit to your suffrages the fundamental bases of a Constitution to be developed subsequently by the Assemblies.

“1. A responsible Chief chosen for ten years.

“2. Ministers depending on the Executive power only.

“3. A Council of State, composed of the most distinguished men, who shall prepare the laws, and support their discussion before the legislative body.

“4. A Legislative Body which shall discuss and vote the laws, and shall be elected by universal suffrage without *scrutin de liste*, which perverts all election.

“A second Assembly chosen from among all the eminent men of the country, a rectifying power, the guardian of the fundamental compact and of public liberties.

“This system, created by the First Consul at the beginning of the century, has already given pros-

perity and tranquillity to France; it will be their guarantee once more.

“Such is my profound conviction. If you share it, show it by your suffrages. If on the contrary you prefer a powerless Government, monarchical or republican, borrowed from I know not which past or from some chimerical future, reply in the negative.

“Thus, for the first time since 1804, you will vote with a knowledge of facts, and fully aware for whom and for what you vote.

“If I do not obtain the majority, I will convene a fresh Assembly to whom to hand back the mission I hold from you.

“But if you believe that the cause of which my name is the symbol—that is to say, a France regenerated by the Revolution of '89 and reorganized by the Emperor—is still yours, proclaim it by confirming the powers I ask of you.

“Then France and Europe will be safe against anarchy, obstacles will vanish, all pretext at rivalry will disappear, because all will respect, in the decision of the people, the decree of Providence.

“Given at the Palace of the Elysée, the 2nd December, 1851.

“LOUIS NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.”



Then came the proclamation to the army.

“Proclamation of the President of the Republic to  
the Army.

“SOLDIERS!

“Be proud of your mission; you will save the country, because I depend on you, not to violate the laws, but to compel respect for the first law of the country, the sovereignty of the nation, whose legitimate representative I am.

“For a long while you have suffered with me from the obstacles that opposed both the good I wished to do you and the demonstrations of your sympathies in my favour.

“Those obstacles are broken down. The Assembly has attempted the authority which I hold from the whole of the nation. The Assembly has ceased to exist.

“I make a loyal appeal to the people and to the army, and I say: Give me the means to insure your prosperity or choose another in my place.

“In 1830 as in 1848 you have been treated as are the vanquished. Your heroic disinterestedness, your sympathies, and your wishes were disparaged, disdainfully ignored; nevertheless, you are the flower of the nation. To-day in this solemn moment I wish the army to make its voice heard.

“Therefore vote freely like all other citizens ; but being soldiers as well, do not forget that a passive obedience to the Chief of the Government is the rigorous duty of the army, from the general to the soldier. It devolves upon me, responsible for my acts to the people and to posterity, to take the measures that seem indispensable to me to the public welfare.

“As for you, adhere strictly to the rules of discipline and honour. By your imposing attitude aid the country to manifest her will amid tranquillity and reflection. Hold yourselves ready to suppress all attempt against the free exercise of the sovereign will of the nation. .

“Soldiers, I do not speak to you of the memories my name evokes. They are engraved on your hearts. We are united by insoluble ties. Your history is mine. There is between us in the past community of glory and misfortune ; there will be in the future community of feeling and resolve for the tranquillity and grandeur of France.

“Given at the Palace of the Elysée, the 2nd December, 1851.

“LOUIS NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.”

Finally came the proclamation of the Prefect of

Police to the inhabitants of Paris. It was couched in the following terms :—

“The Prefect of Police to the Inhabitants of Paris.

“INHABITANTS OF PARIS !

“The President of the Republic by a courageous initiative has frustrated the machinations of parties and will put an end to the sufferings of the country.

“It is in the name of the people, for her welfare and for the maintenance of the Republic, that the event has been accomplished.

“It is to the judgment of the people that Louis Napoleon submits his conduct.

“The grandeur of the act is sufficient to make you understand with what imposing and solemn quietude the free exercise of the sovereignty of the people should be exercised. Therefore to-day as yesterday let order be our banner; let every good citizen animated like myself by the love of country lend me his support with a firm resolve.

“Inhabitants of Paris !

“Have confidence in him whom six millions of votes have raised to the chief magistracy of the country. When he calls upon the whole of the nation to express her will, only the factious would wish to place obstacles in the way.

“Accordingly every attempt at disturbance will be promptly and relentlessly suppressed.

“Paris, the 2nd December, 1851.

“The Prefect of Police,

“DE MAUPAS.”

Thus everything was punctually carried out. Nothing up till now had hindered the execution of our plan. At seven o'clock I received the verbatim reports of the arrests of Generals Changarnier and Cavaignac. The others arrived at the interval of a few minutes. At forty minutes past six all the arrests were over; all without exception had been made in the conditions anticipated. They had provoked no serious incident. Resistance was to be foreseen, and had in fact occurred, but brought in its wake none of the misfortunes to be dreaded. The moment an arrest had been made, an agent belonging to the squad entrusted with its execution came to acquaint me with the result. In that way I was informed in less than half an hour of what had taken place at every point of Paris, and I in my turn sent the information to the Elysée and to the Ministry of War.

I waited until M. de Morny should have taken possession of his post and advised me of the fact by telegraph, as had been arranged, to acquaint

the Ministry of the Interior with the events of the night. He arrived there at a quarter-past seven. The first and happy tidings that welcomed his arrival was that of the complete success of the enterprise to which he had been initiated.

M. de Morny had, in fact, been belated in the taking possession of his new functions. Instead of reaching the Ministry at a quarter-past six, as had been arranged the previous evening, and of personally acquainting M. de Thorigny with the circumstances by reason of which he came to replace him, M. de Thorigny, when he awoke at seven o'clock, was told of the occupation by the military of his official residence.\* It had been arranged, in fact, that a battalion should take possession of the Ministry at half-past six, that is to say, a quarter of an hour after the time fixed for the installation of M. de Morny. The latter only arriving at a quarter-past seven, the battalion preceded instead of following him. As a matter of course, M. de Thorigny—surprised and at a loss to understand this display of military force in the courtyard and even inside his official residence—M. de Thorigny sent me the following telegraphic message:—

\* The Prince had wished to explain himself to M. de Thorigny the reasons that compelled this separation. The letter that contained the explanations was to be handed to M. de Thorigny by M. de Morny on his arrival, before anything had transpired of what was being prepared.

“ The Minister of the Interior to the Prefect of  
Police.

“ *2nd December, 7 A.M*

“ What has happened ? The courtyard of the  
Ministry is full of troops.

“ DE THORIGNY.”

To this message I sent the following answer :—

“ The Prefect of Police to the Minister of the  
Interior.

“ *2nd December, 7.10 A M*

“ M. de Morny is charged to tell you ; he will be  
with you in a moment. Wait for him.

“ DE MAUPAS.”

Even before the arrival of this message I had been very uneasy at not receiving the communication which it was arranged M. de Morny should send me by telegraph immediately on his arrival at the Ministry. The execution of our plan was arranged minute by minute ; a delay like this in the taking possession of the Ministry of the Interior was incomprehensible. I could address no despatch to the Minister to clear up the mystery. In whose hands would it have fallen ? I only knew through the operator seated at the dial close to my private room that his colleague at the Ministry of the

Interior was at his post and that our communications were perfect. The reader will understand my surprise when at seven o'clock, namely, three-quarters of an hour after M. de Morny should have entered upon his functions, I received the foregoing message signed by M. de Thorigny.

At last, at a quarter-past seven, M. de Morny arrived at the Ministry of the Interior and handed the Prince's letter to M. de Thorigny. This abrupt notice, under the conditions that it came to him, deeply grieved the Minister whom it deposed. M. de Thorigny, as we have already said, was a man of lofty principles and honour. He was sincerely devoted to the Prince; he had shown himself ready on the 17th November to bring matters to a crisis. Without immediately weighing the grave responsibilities of which he was thus divested, it seemed cruel to him to be replaced at the supreme moment. What really grieved him was not the loss of a portfolio which he had never coveted, but the want of confidence of the Chief of the State whom he had loyally served. He retired from the position in a manner worthy of himself; his attitude showed all the nobleness of his character.

The occupation of the Ministry of the Interior was only an episode in the military movement

which at the same moment embraced the whole of the capital. With that scrupulous punctuality which the sentiment of duty made him bring to all things, General de Saint-Arnaud had at the hour fixed upon—half-past six—called out all the troops that were to occupy the positions indicated in the “plan of dispositions in the event of a conflict.” All those points were occupied.

The bearing of the troops was excellent; they guessed from the very beginning, though they had no definite idea of the nature of, the event to which they were co-operating. When towards seven o'clock their presentiments were confirmed by the reading of the placarded proclamations, there was everywhere a genuine outburst of satisfaction.

The army had still to avenge two cruel affronts very vividly present to its memory, those of 1830 and 1848. On those two sad occasions it had been abandoned by the supreme power and given up by several of its chiefs. To-day it had at its head a Prince who possessed its whole confidence. The army was still under the sympathetic influence of the noble words which Louis Napoleon had addressed a few days before to its assembled officers: “If ever the hour of danger struck, I should not do like the governments that preceded



me, and I should not say to you, 'Go, I follow you,' but, 'I go, you follow me.'"

At a quarter-past eight I had all the verbatim reports relative to the various arrests, and the majority of the commissaries who had been entrusted with them had come back from Mazas and reported themselves to me in my private room. They verbally completed the summary information of their written statements. I need not say that I thanked those brave auxiliaries with all my heart for their courage and ability. They knew by now the great event with which they had associated themselves; they felt very proud, full of enthusiasm, and impatient to proceed to the new posts I indicated to them. Nothing could equal the excitement at the Prefecture of Police. We have said that the arrests had been carried out without any serious incidents. It may be interesting to give some details of the circumstances that had attended them.' It will be understood, though, that on this point we are pledged to considerable reticence.

The commissary of police, Lerat, who was to arrest General Changarnier had left the Prefecture at thirty-five minutes past five. Like his colleagues he had found at a certain spot the necessary conveyances, and at another spot a superintendent

and twenty police agents who had instructions to accompany him.

At ten minutes past six a picket of the mounted Municipal Guard and another on foot, under Captain Baudinet, took up their positions at No. 7 of the Rue Royale, within a stone's throw of General Changarnier's residence, No. 3, Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré.

At six o'clock the commissary rang the bell at General Changarnier's.

But the concierge was absolutely devoted to his illustrious tenant; he had, moreover, been on his guard for a very long time; he did not open at night without very valid reasons. To his questions before opening M. Lerat replied in a manner that did not altogether satisfy him. The concierge asked for additional explanations, to which the commissary, who foresaw the resistance he was likely to meet, answered very complacently.

During this colloquy, skilfully prolonged, his superintendent got into the courtyard by passing through a grocer's shop situated on the ground floor of the building, and opened the principal door to the commissary.

In a moment M. Lerat, the superintendent, and ten of his men were at the door of the general's apartment; not, however, before the concierge, who

had the start of them by a minute. When he saw the agents in the courtyard he rushed up the staircase, rang the bell, had time to have the door opened and to warn the general. But our agents came at his heels, and the warning led fortunately to none of the disastrous consequences that were to be feared.

Previous to the verbal details communicated to me by M. Lerat, I had received from the superintendent the following report:—

“2nd December, 6.35 A.M.

“REPORT.

“ Arrest of General Changarnier.

“ At six A.M. we accompanied M. Lerat, commissary of police, to arrest General Changarnier at his domicile, 3, Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré.

“ The concierge having refused to open the door, we effected an entrance to the premises by way of a grocer's shop, and found said concierge leaving the apartment of the general, whom he had had time to warn. The general stood in the doorway in his shirt, with a pistol in each hand, but we do not think he meant to use them, because he surrendered immediately, only saying, ‘I expected the *Coup d'État*, and here it is.’

“ We have made a careful search, but found nothing but a pair of pistols and a regulation rifle.

The general has been taken to Mazas by M. Lerat and a captain of the Republican Guard.

“We have also arrested said M. Harenger, the concierge of the general, in whose lodge we found a parcel of cartridges and two regulation pistols.

“L’OFFICIER DE PAIX (Superintendent).”

Thus the general had attempted no serious resistance; he understood that it would be fruitless, and submitted. He asked to be accompanied by his servant, which request was granted immediately, and went down with M. Lerat to take his seat in the carriage that was waiting to take him under escort to Mazas.

Neither did the arrests of the two quæstors, M. Baze and General Le Flô, both residing in the Palace of the Assembly, afford any serious difficulties from the moment the Palace was occupied by the soldiery. Every issue being guarded, they were virtually prisoners even before they were secured. Still things did not pass off so easily.

The two commissaries, MM. Primorin and Bertoglio, had some trouble to find the apartments of the quæstors in the mazy distribution of the building. When M. Bertoglio entered the room of General Le Flô, the latter was sound asleep; but very quickly recovering from his first emotion, the

General dressed hurriedly, while protesting against the measure of which he was the victim. He began by bullying the commissary and threatened to have him shot; then he showered invective upon the President, General de Saint-Arnaud, and the Prefect of Police. It was only after some lively resistance that he left his apartment.

At the foot of his staircase the general came upon Colonel Espinasse, who had remained within ear-shot with a detachment of soldiers; he apostrophized him in the bitterest of terms, and at the same time harangued the men who surrounded him. Both the colonel and his men paid not the slightest attention. Once in the carriage with M. Bertoglio and the two agents who were to take him to Mazas, the general made not the least resistance.

The second quæstor, M. Baze, showed still greater irritation and was even more violent than General Le Flô. He resorted to every means of resistance. He refused to dress himself, and had almost to be taken by force to the carriage waiting for him. Meanwhile he heaped insults upon everybody. Like General Le Flô he vehemently addressed the officers and soldiers who lined his passage. Not a word of sympathy rewarded his attempt. The 42nd remained callous; it had its orders and adhered to them rigorously.

At the two quæstors', as at General Changar-

nier's, the two commissaries had proceeded to a rapid examination of such papers as might offer a political interest. At M. Baze's two documents were seized that by themselves would have justified the measures of the 2nd December. They were two drafts of decrees indited in view of the hoped-for voting of the Quæstors' Bill of the 17th November.

The first read as follows :—

“Decree:

“The President of the National Assembly.

“Whereas Article 32 of the Constitution provides that—

“The Assembly determines the place of its sittings, fixes the contingent of the military forces necessary to its security and disposes of them.

“Whereas Article 112 of the rules of the Assembly provides that—

“The President is entrusted with the measures for the safety of the National Assembly from within and from without.

“By virtue of which he exercises in the name of the Assembly the right granted to the legislative power in pursuance of Article 32 of the Constitution to determine the number of military forces necessary to its security, and to dispose of them.

“Requires M . . . to take the immediate command of all the forces both of the army and the

*National Guard stationed within the first military division with the view of insuring the safety of the National Assembly.*

“Given at the Palace of the National Assembly the . . . .”

The second decree was as follows :—

“Decree :

“The President of the National Assembly, &c.,

“In virtue of Article 32 of the Constitution ;

“In virtue of Article 112 of the rules of the Assembly ;

“Requires all generals, commanders of detachments or contingents, whether of the army or National Guard, stationed in the first military division, to comply with the orders of General . . . . entrusted with the safety of the National Assembly.

“Given at the Palace of the National Assembly the . . . .”

The vast importance of those authentic documents is such that we might abstain from all comment upon them. Let us only point out that after reading them it will be admitted that we remained within the terms of the strictest truth when, in speaking of the sitting of the 17th November and of the measures taken by us, we insisted upon our right to provide against an imminent aggression.

Even among our adversaries it will occur to no one, to deny that the name left in blank in the decree found at M. Baze's was that of General Changarnier. And in ordering General Changarnier "*to take the immediate command of all the forces both of the army and the National Guard stationed within the first military division*, with a view of insuring the safety of the National Assembly," the latter would have succeeded in absolutely depriving the Chief of the State and the Minister for War of all authority over the army of Paris. There did not remain in the capital *one single soldier under their orders*. The military force and the supreme power with it were lawfully handed over to General Changarnier, and he could put into execution without resistance the famous project which, as we have already shown, he had expounded to M. Odilon Barrot—he could put the President of the Republic at Vincennes.

The arrests of Generals de Lamoricière and Bedeau and that of Colonel Charras gave rise to incidents similar to those of which we have already spoken with reference to M. Baze. The same fruitless resistance, the same attempts to address the troops on their way to Mazas, the same indifference on the part of the officers and soldiers, and finally the same punctuality on the part



of the commissaries in the execution of their orders.

General Cavaignac was more guarded in the expression of his anger. He remained very dignified, and merely inquired about the measures he supposed had been taken with reference to his fellow members. His arrival at Mazas fully enlightened him on the subject.

As for M. Thiers, his arrest led to a curious scene, to say the least. Awakened by the entrance of Commissary Hubault, senior, M. Thiers was at first taken with a genuine terror when told that the former had come to arrest him. His words became incoherent: "He did not want to die, he was not a criminal, he did not conspire, henceforth he would abstain from all politics, he would retire to some foreign country." All this was said and delivered with exceeding volubility, without M. Hubault being able to edge in a word. But when this first agitation had subsided, when the commissary had succeeded in persuading M. Thiers that his life was not in jeopardy, the natural disposition pierced through, and the illustrious orator, sitting down on his bed, began to hold forth as if he had been a simple looker-on of the scene. To the reiterated requests of M. Hubault to get up and dress himself, he responded by a very uncere-

monious act, which it would have been more dignified to abstain from. Then, still undressed, he leisurely walked to a piece of furniture, "to get a pair of pistols," as he said. "If I were to blow your brains out," said M. Thiers to the commissary, "do you know that I am armed, and that I would have every excuse to treat you as a malefactor." M. Hubault had not the least trouble to calm this bellicose humour of his interlocutor; he merely showed him that he also was provided with means of defence, and the question of pistols was dropped.

But M. Thiers had gradually regained his confidence, and he began to indulge in a series of pleasantries, so much out of place under the circumstances that they betrayed his efforts to hide the real state of his mind. This painful scene lasted for more than a quarter of an hour, and looked as if it were to last much longer, it evidently being M. Thiers' intention to gain time. What could have been his hopes? M. Hubault finally requested M. Thiers to dress himself, and a few minutes afterwards he took his seat with the commissary in the carriage that was waiting at the door of his residence. Then the attitude of M. Thiers changed all of a sudden. His first terror took hold of him once more. "You are going to

have me shot," he said; "I see well enough that I am being led to execution." Being again reassured on that point, he inquired whether he was the only one that had been arrested; he tried to bribe the commissary into letting him escape by the promise of a large reward. At Mazas M. Thiers fell into a state of complete prostration; his strength wholly forsook him. He was immediately attended to with the greatest care.\*

The arrest of the various other representatives was not marked by any incident worthy of notice. MM. Nadaud and Roger showed themselves resigned to their fate. M. Lagrange, who had come home in the morning thoroughly inebriated, indulged in the most violent imprecations. M. Cholat, rendered powerless at first by the dread of being shot, plucked up a moment of fictitious courage by the absorption of an enormous quantity of absinthe. MM. Miot, Valentin, Baune, offered no resistance, nor was there any serious difficulty

\* A somewhat similar version of M. Thiers' arrest, and probably derived from the same source that supplied M. de Maupas, namely, the detailed report of Commissary Hubault, has been often contradicted by Royalists and Republicans alike. Still it is but just to say that the contradiction on both sides was of the most lukewarm nature. Those who knew M. Thiers best, and from personal experience, Alex. Dumas the elder among the number, thoroughly believed in it. During the Revolution of June, 1830, M. Thiers did not show himself the bravest of the brave.—*Translator.*

with regard to the demagogues who did not belong to the Assembly, and the majority of whom were pretty well accustomed to the visits of the police.\* May we add one amusing anecdote to this serious narrative? It would seem that however sad the fate of the impounded representatives, there was still room left for envy.

During the morning of the 2nd December I received the visit of a very charming lady, whose husband, an eminent lawyer always, a violent Mountaineer at times, had not been arrested. Mme. C. came to protest against this omission. "I do not know what to do," she said; "our house is absolutely invested by the most sinister-looking individuals. A gang of bandits are asking my husband to head the resistance, to provoke a revolt; he still preaches patience; but they pester him so that he'll be compelled to yield. They'll take him to the barricades and have him killed. There is but one means of setting my mind at rest, to save the life of my husband, and it lies in your

\* It will be easily understood without our insisting on it that the particulars we are enabled to give of the arrests are extracts from the reports of the commissaries of police and the superintendents at the very moment when they executed the instructions of the Prefecture of Police. If we have not reproduced those documents, which we copied at the time, it is because some of their details might have offended the susceptibilities of interested parties.

power, M. le Prefet, to grant it." Seeing that I did not exactly catch her meaning, that I was at a loss to understand the exact nature of her request, Mme. C. resumed: "It is easy enough, M. le Prefet; have him arrested. I know you will not harm him, and, at any rate, his abominable friends will not be able to worry him when he is in Mazas." But the peaceable member of the Mountain had at that hour done nothing as yet to justify the rigorous measures so ingeniously suggested by Mme. C. in an excess of conjugal devotion. I declined to have recourse to the heroic means pointed out, but promised her to have her husband carefully and closely watched. I kept my word, and in that way obtained proof positive of what indeed I had always more than suspected, that the most fiery speeches were often nothing more than a concession to too-exacting friends; that in the hour of danger the ticklish part of the business was left to the simpletons and fanatics of the party, to those whose mission it is to get themselves killed to further the ambition of a few. Our republican barrister remained within the wholesome and traditional doctrines of the revolutionary aristocracy. He draped himself in his dignity of party leader, was lavish of advice, shrank from no extreme—in speech—exhausted

himself still more than in the tribune in protestations of his love of liberty, of the people, of democracy; but that was all. Nevertheless there came a moment when his warmth of speech excited the apprehension of the agents appointed to watch him. The reader may therefore judge of my surprise when I received a report telling me of the arrest of the impetuous member of the Mountain. Had my agents taken him *au sérieux*, or had Mme C. been more successful with my subordinates than with me and prevailed upon them to lend themselves to her prudent solicitude? At any rate the lady might sleep in peace, at last she had obtained the favour she so earnestly craved; her husband was under lock and key.\*

What was the attitude of the illustrious prisoners whilst at Mazas, what was their treatment? To what severities were they exposed, what consideration did they receive? How much faith are we to place on the fantastic tales of which the demagogical and radical pamphleteers have made themselves the editors? We do not care to reply to the question ourselves. We do not even think it meet to reproduce here the courteous testi-

\* We are not bound to the reticence of M. de Maupas with regard to names. The deputy in question was M. Adolphe Crémieux, the celebrated barrister.—*Trans.*

monies of Generals Changarnier and Cavaignac, thanking the Prefect of Police for the exceptional considerations they had received, for the manner in which their short captivity had been lightened. We will simply let the two commissioners in extraordinary to whom we confided the task of representing us at Mazas, speak.\* This report, written at Mazas itself on the 2nd December, offers the interest of dealing with the question at the actual moment. No account can stand against this document, which, as far as its author knew, was never intended for publication.

The report read as follows :—

“ MAZAS, 2nd December.

“ At half-past five, Colonel Thiérion and I left the Prefecture of Police on our way to Mazas.

“ The Colonel's mission was to prevent all attempt at rescue; mine to superintend the administrative arrangements, and to see that the expected prisoners were treated with the greatest consideration.

“ Mazas prison is situated on the Boulevard of that name. The principal entrance consists of a

\* I have only spoken of Colonel Thiérion, because he alone was virtually entrusted with an official mission. To make assurance doubly sure we gave him a coadjutor, a man of social position, who was also instructed to see that nothing was left untied to lighten the confinement of our political adversaries.

heavy door with very solid railings, placed somewhat farther back than the pavilions to the right and left which form its frame. In the wall of the latter has been built a door for the ordinary traffic of the building. The large gates are only opened for carriages.

“Both those entrances open upon a yard that precedes the prison proper. At the bottom of the yard is a short flight of steps that leads to another door, which gives access to the building. The first apartments are devoted to the administration.

“When we got to Mazas the Colonel presented to the warder on duty the order of the Prefect of Police. We crossed the yard and ascended the staircase to the apartment of the Governor. The latter was still in bed. We waited for him in the dining-room. The Colonel handed him a letter from the Prefect. ‘I am at your service, Messieurs,’ said the Governor when he had read it, and went away to finish dressing. We went down to his office adjacent to the archives of the prison. The Colonel went away to inspect the military posts. I remained with the Governor to see to the interior arrangements necessitated by the numerous arrests that were being made at the same hour. Injunctions to act with the greatest circumspection were given to the whole of the staff. The arrange-



ments concluded, the Colonel joined me in the archives.

"It was six o'clock. The arrests were to be made between six and half-past. Considering the distances, the first prisoners would make their appearance at Mazas towards seven o'clock.

"At five minutes to that hour the noise of wheels coming from the boulevard was heard. Almost immediately afterwards the door of the left lodge opened and admitted Colonel Charras and the agents that accompanied him. The Colonel's features showed the traces of violent agitation. He quickly ascended the shallow flight of steps and entered the archives, but his gait was nervous, and his attitude displayed great irritation.

"Scarcely had Colonel Charras disappeared within the prison than the great gates swung back to admit two cabs, escorted by a mounted picket, which noisily clattered into the yard and took up its position at the foot of the flight of steps. The first cab was opened and General Lamoricière alighted from it. He was accompanied by a commissary and an officer of the municipal police (superintendent). The second cab contained nothing but agents.

"The general was in mufti; he looked very crestfallen. With a heavy tread he ascended the

stairs ; every one uncovered, he was received with the greatest marks of respect. When the General left the archives to go to the room prepared for him he requested that the last five volumes of the "French Revolution," by M. Thiers, might be sent for from his home. His request was immediately complied with.

"Meanwhile the arrivals succeeded each other rapidly and the archives were getting crowded. At every table occupied by one of the officials stood in turns a general, a deputy, or some political personage whom fate had brought hither. He gave his name, his age, his grade, his title ; the whole was inscribed, after which he was conducted to the interior of the prison.

"Those whose arrest had been accompanied by a seizure of papers were taken to the private office of the Governor. This was the case with Deputy Miot ; a heap of documents had been found at his domicile. He was very violent, and threatened everybody. We had the greatest difficulty in calming him.

"Others preserved a more peaceful attitude. Deputy Valentin submitted to his fate with a kind of phlegmatic ostentation. He did not take his broad-brimmed soft wideawake off, his long blue cravat and turned-down collar still further enhanced

his very juvenile appearance. While they were making out the warrant for his reception he quietly continued to read his paper.

“From one end of the archives to the other there were greetings of recognition, bitter smiles, signs, and words were exchanged. Generals Changarnier and Cavaignac met. ‘How he treats us,’ said General Changarnier across the room to General Cavaignac, ‘how he treats us. Well, he makes a mistake, because he would certainly have been re-elected next May, but now. . . .’

“After which General Changarnier asked to be allowed to write to his sister. The note ran as follows: ‘Set your mind at rest, I am treated with the greatest consideration. M. de Maupas treats me like a gentleman.’

“About half-past eight all the arrests were over. To the noise and commotion of the morning succeeds the ordinary calm of Mazas. There is not the least attempt at escape. Nor has there been any attempt from the outside to rescue the prisoners. The only thing noticeable is a group or so of loiterers round about the prison, which the agents quietly disperse now and then. Our measures are taken to energetically resist all attack if necessary.

“The Commissioner in extraordinary delegated,  
“X. . . .”

Our instructions had been punctually executed. No precaution had been neglected to guard our illustrious prisoners against any attempt on the part of foes or friends, and every measure that was possible had been rigorously taken to soften the severities inseparable from the critical situation.

The most important and decisive fact of what is called the 2nd December was accomplished. The plot of General Changarnier was foiled by his arrest and that of his principal accomplices. The demagogical uprising was equally paralyzed in its action; the leading organizers of it were at Mazas, only the general utilities and supernumeraries remained at large; and we were soon enabled to judge, by what this insurrection deprived of its leaders attempted to do, of what it could have done if the latter had been at its head to recruit the revolutionary masses and to lead them to battle.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### PACIFIC RESISTANCE

The Aspect of Paris during the Morning of the 2nd December.—Copies of the Reports addressed to the Prefect of Police.—Meetings of Representatives.—M. Odilon Barrot's Protest.—Attempt at a Sitting at the Palais-Bourbon.—M. Dupin and the Representatives.—Meeting at Count Daru's.—The *Mairie* of the 10th Arrondissement.—First Dispatch of Troops.—The Reinforcements of General Forey.—Summons to disperse and its Results.—The 218 ex-Representatives at the Barracks of the Quai d'Orsay.—First Appearance of Louis Napoleon.—The Army of Paris and Colonel Fleury.—The High Court of Justice.

THE noise of the arrests we have just described had quickly spread through Paris. What was the aspect of the capital at that particular moment? People were reading the placards, they saw the army take up its positions at the most important points of Paris, and one glance sufficed to judge of its strength and compactness. We could also, in imitation of those who have written the history of those events from various points of view, give our appreciation of them. Certain as we are that in this, as in all things, we should remain within the limits of the strictest truth, we prefer in our summing up the state of public opinion to profit

by a means circumstances placed at our disposal. We were enabled to keep some copies of the reports addressed to us by the agents of the Prefecture of Police. It would be useless to produce them all, the reader will be sufficiently enlightened by the perusal of a few taken at random. The others are almost their textual reproduction. One may implicitly believe in them. They come from men who have no other mission than the surveillance of the public thoroughfares, whose business is to say what they see, what they hear, and who under every régime have done so with an impartiality bordering upon indifference. We shall only quote two of those reports. They resume the situation in themselves.

“14TH ARRONDISSEMENT, 2nd December, 8.30 A.M.

“REPORT.

“The dissolution of the Assembly and the other measures taken by the President of the Republic are known to the inhabitants of the arrondissements, who do not appear to be much affected by them.

“The majority appear satisfied, and say, ‘Well done’ (‘Il a bien fait’).

“No dangerous gatherings.

“Quiet prevails everywhere.

“L’Officier de Paix, DE BEAUMARCHAIS.”

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"FAUBOURG ST. ANTOINE, 2nd December, 8.40 A. M.

"We have just traversed the quarter of the Hôtel de Ville, the Faubourg du Temple, the Rue Menilmontant, the Faubourg St. Antoine, the Rue St. Antoine.

"Everywhere the crowds are very compact, but nothing serious is to be apprehended; everyone applauds the President, and nothing is heard but, 'Well done, well done;' 'Vive Napoléon.'

"L'Officier de Paix, HENRICY."

These words "well done," alluding to the act of Louis Napoleon, figure in both these reports, written at the self-same hour, and coming from different quarters. They are found textually in a great number of other reports.

The specially political reports on the doings of the various parties are confided to agents of a different category, who have no relations whatsoever with those whose opinions we have just given. Those reports are generally somewhat lengthy, owing to the nature of the subject of which they treat; it would occupy too much time to wade through them. We shall confine ourselves to a summary of those portions treating of the members of the ex-National Assembly. In fact it is only from the latter that serious complications

could come at the beginning, because they alone could place their resistance under the ægis of the law of yesterday.

The decrees and proclamations were scarcely known than there was a great stir amongst the representatives of every shade hostile to the Prince. They called upon each other and devised the necessary measures for meeting within brief delay ; they hurriedly consulted about the means of organizing immediate resistance. Groups were formed in each quarter at the leading representative's of the circumscription. In that way small meetings were held in the first hours at M. Crémieux's, the Count Daru's, M. Yvan's, and Odilon Barrot's. If we are to believe M. Victor Hugo, a few members of the Mountain also met at his house at the first news of affairs. Our reports did not mention any meeting of the kind at the great poet's. It is true our agents only watched the dangerous personages. M. Victor Hugo was considered absolutely inoffensive. Events have proved it. Thanks to this our opinion he could enjoy his full liberty and bestir himself as much as he pleased.

Several members of the meeting of the Rue des Pyramides had also repaired to their trysting place ; but almost every opinion was represented there, and if resistance was proposed the party of sub-



mission to accomplished facts numbered as many adherents as the party of resistance. Nevertheless the latter course was decided on ; the meeting was just about to draw up a protest when the arrival of agents of the Prefecture cut short all deliberation. The meeting dispersed with scarcely any show of temper.

At MM. Crémieux's and Odilon Barrot's the agents had equally broken up the sittings. At M. Odilon Barrot's the agents seized a protest already provided with several signatures, amongst others those of M. Odilon Barrot himself, MM. Dufaure, Piscatory, Duvergier de Hauranne, de Tocqueville, Chambolle, and H. Passy. This protest might be taken as the stereotyped formula of capitulation.

We have already remarked upon the skill of Colonel Espinasse in taking possession of the Palace of the Assembly. The special motive of this occupation was to prevent the representatives from meeting at their official centre. They would not have failed to constitute a government to oppose that of the Prince, and their orders, emanating as it were from their official residence, would have been more attentively listened to than if they had merely emanated from some chance spot, to occupy which at such moments always denotes either defeat or conspiracy.

The reader will perceive how in all things the attention to details becomes an imperative necessity side by side with preoccupations of a higher order. Once master of the Palais-Bourbon, of the quæstors, master besides of President Dupin, master of all the issues, Colonel Espinasse might indeed believe his mission well accomplished. Consequently he gave one of his officers instructions to post at every door a sentry with strict orders not to let any one enter or leave. A single oversight threatened to compromise everything. A door that opens on the Rue de Bourgogne, facing the Rue de Lille, had not got a sentry, and such of the representatives as, after vainly trying the principal entrances, had the idea of making a last attempt at the door of the Rue de Bourgogne, succeeded in penetrating to the palace and installed themselves in their ordinary meeting place. The hall was not even guarded by a sentry. The precaution had appeared useless, so convinced felt everybody that no representative could gain admission to the building itself. The discovery of the representatives in their own hall produced the liveliest commotion. Their sudden appearance could not be accounted for, with the belief that all the doors were guarded. When at last the omission was found out two instead of one sentry were placed at the neglected door.

The representatives devoted to the cause of the President of the Republic had either remained at their own domiciles or gone to the Elysée to congratulate the Prince. A small number had been to the meeting of the Rue des Pyramides. Hence all those who sought to group themselves and to deliberate might be considered hostile to the Prince, and it was because of this that I had given the strictest orders to disperse any meeting whatsoever of representatives.

The group that was sitting at the Palace itself was, like all the others, opposed to the events that had been accomplished, but it was so small numerically that it understood its own impotency, and merely confined itself to an exchange of impressions and to some unimportant resolutions. Not but what it tried to entice to this attempt at resistance the President of the Assembly, though the latter prudently kept to his apartments. M. Dupin knew the people he had to deal with; he had no taste for useless demonstrations; he took care to explain very clearly to those of his colleagues who went in search of him that he was the fittest judge of the dignity of the Assembly, that they compromised instead of enhancing this dignity by their attempt at useless resistance with so small a number. He showed them the impossibility of getting the

Chamber together, the necessity of submitting in presence of a power which seemed to dominate everything. And after this little speech, in which the President had been unable to refrain from some pungent pleasantries, he quitted his colleagues with his stereotyped formula of salutation, "Gentlemen, I have the great honour to wish you good-bye."

The rôle of the ex-representatives united within the Chamber became absolutely critical. Abandoned by their President, having not even a Vice-president to take his place, they became the prey of two or three members of the Mountain, who were firmly determined, safe from all danger as they believed themselves to be, to cover themselves with glory by means of the most incendiary proposals. If a pardonable sense of self-respect had not detained many of the ex-representatives, they would have left the Palace immediately after M. Dupin, deeming their presence there at such a moment a sufficient discharge of their debt to the Republic.

But the most violent held out; they endeavoured to work their wavering colleagues up to their own pitch, and the whole were just about to recapitulate the resolutions already taken, when a company of mobile gendarmerie entered the Chamber with Major Sausserotte at its head. This brave officer had his orders. They were, to clear the Chamber.

He explained in terms of soldier-like brevity the object of his mission, and bade the orators, who tried to incite the soldiers to disobedience, be silent. A moment afterwards the actors in this meeting left, some to return home, two or three to go to the Elysée, some others again to join elsewhere their colleagues who were determined upon resistance.

Shortly after this a new attempt was made to enter the Palace. We have already said that one of the improvised meetings of representatives had taken place early in the morning at one of the Vice-Presidents of the Chamber, Count Daru's; in the Rue de Lille. Several smaller meetings dispersed by the police had gone to Count Daru's, amongst others the one that had been held at M. Odilon Barrot's.\* When they believed themselves sufficiently numerous for a demonstration they went out and advanced in a regular column upon the principal gate of the Chamber, which every one as he passed it must have noticed to be strongly

\* The number of representatives who were present at the meeting in the Rue de Lille has been greatly exaggerated. Some estimated it at eighty, others maintain that there were a hundred and twenty members present at the moment of going to the Palace, and a hundred and eighty when the house was cleared. Our own reports gave figures that were not always the same. They varied with the hours. What we can affirm, however, is that at no moment were there a hundred and eighty representatives assembled at Count Daru's.

guarded. They demanded, uselessly of course, admission, and when persistence was met by the order to "cross bayonets," they retraced their steps to Count Daru's.

The meeting at Count Daru's had been reported to me at its very start. I had deemed it expedient to leave it free, though watched, while it remained pacific; but the demonstration it had just indulged revealed militant intentions—the moment seemed propitious to disperse it. On my requisition a battalion surrounded the house of Count Daru, and its commander had it cleared. There was no resistance, every one left; the most obstinate went in search of a new meeting place. From that moment the Rue de Lille and the approaches to the Palais-Bourbon resumed their thorough tranquil aspect. There were a great many soldiers and a great many lookers-on, but all attempt at disorder was over on that side.

Assuredly we might have flattered ourselves that complications with regard to the dissolved Assembly were at an end; their members had consciously performed what they imagined to be an imperative duty. We willingly admit that they could not allow without protesting against it, the accomplishing of an act against which they had thundered from the tribune and in their jour-

nals. For their dignity's sake they could do no less than what they had attempted in their different meetings, and it was our duty to understand this. Those kind of demonstrations remained almost wholly ignored; they were not of a nature to either impress the army or to agitate the population. We had nothing serious to apprehend from them; I had carefully noted their formation and their development from the beginning, and felt myself justified in abstaining from any severe measures without the slightest danger; with very few exceptions everything had passed off very amiably indeed.

I might no doubt have surely paralyzed all subsequent attempts at resistance on the part of the dissolved Parliament by resorting to arrests in the spots where the ex-representatives had concentrated. But as much as I had inclined to neglect no necessary measure of prevention, as much did I desire to abstain, within the limits compatible with our own security, from needless severity with regard to men whom we esteemed, and the majority of whom were only separated from us by dissensions which it might be possible to efface. It is because of this that at the Palace of the Assembly, at the Rue des Pyramides, at Count Daru's, and elsewhere, I had given orders: first counsel dis-

persion, to point out afterwards the uselessness and danger of resistance, to abstain from wholesale arrests. As for isolated ones, they should only be resorted to in the event of too violent speech or action, but not before. Some of the latter took place on the Place du Palais-Bourbon. The ex-representatives who were the victims remained deaf to every warning, and were taken in the act of addressing the soldiery.

Up till the time of dispersing the meeting at Count Daru's, we could only congratulate ourselves on our leniency; but the situation was assuming a more serious character, and events will show how for a moment we regretted to have trusted too much to a spirit of moderation on the part of others rather than to the dictates of prudence on our own.

While a part of the Right was assembled at Count Daru's, some ex-representatives had organized a sitting at the *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement.\*

The legion of the National Guard of that quarter was commanded by General de Lauriston; it was thought that, like its chief, it must be devoted to the cause of the Assembly. The sympathy of some members of the Municipal Council was also

The *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement was then situated in the Rue de Grenelle St. Germain, near the Croix-Rouge, in a spacious hotel which has disappeared since the rebuilding of the quarter.



counted upon. It was this dual consideration that had determined the choice of a locality, which in exchange for advantages problematical at their best, suffered from the drawback of being situated in one of the quarters of Paris least favourable to political agitations. After some little negotiation the ex-representatives had succeeded in having one of the halls of the *mairie* opened to them. They were still but a small number when the news of the breaking up of the Daru meeting reached them; they sent their colleagues word that at the *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement they would find a comparatively convenient place to deliberate in. The news went from mouth to mouth. A few groups, not dispersed as yet, rallied their ranks and made for the *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement. Its doors, in fact, opened to them without difficulty, and the new-comers, with those of their colleagues who had preceded them, installed themselves in a spacious apartment on the first-floor. Immediately a notice was sent to the residences of all the ex-representatives living on the left bank (of the Seine). In about an hour a hundred and twenty members had answered the summons, and their number was increasing rapidly.

The frustrated meetings at the Rue des Pyramides, at M. Odilon Barrot's, and at Count Daru's, were

almost exclusively made up of the members of the old majority. We knew that, however irritated some of them might be, they would not lightly proceed to extremes. They numbered among them men whose prudent counsels would have, if necessary, discountenanced all compromising proposals. But the presence at the *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement of a great number of members of the Mountain, known for their fanaticism, cut every guarantee of this nature from under our feet.

In troublous moments, in hours of supreme crisis, passion and violence too often prevail over prudence and reason. We shall soon see to what degree this was the case the moment it came to a struggle between the peaceable section of the majority and the fury of the Mountain.

This time the ex-members meant to constitute themselves, and to deliberate as if the National Assembly had not been dissolved; and to act in the name of a Constitution which was no longer anything but an historical memory.\* They knew that the moments of unfettered action at their dis-

\* It is not without having carefully weighed the terms employed that we say here, in speaking of the Constitution of 1848, that it "was no longer anything but an historical memory." In fact, its dissolution was an accomplished fact; and without discussing the right of the power that had pronounced it, one might safely affirm that no one, even amongst those who protested against the measure taken, would have seriously maintained that this Assembly might survive one day.

posals were numbered; not an instant was lost; a standing committee was quickly appointed. To avoid all discussion, such members of the similar committee in the dissolved Chamber as were present were elected. By virtue of this title M. Benoist d'Azy occupied the presidential chair; M. Vitet took his place at his side; MM. Moulin and Chapot resumed their former functions of secretaries, and the orators set busily to work to complete the semblance of a sitting. But more than twenty members wished to speak at once. Each of them, but especially the members of the Mountain, had a proposal ready drawn up, and did not mean to yield to his still more zealous neighbour the initiative of an energetic resolution. All this caused an indescribable tumult, and divested the meeting of two of the conditions essential to regular action, order and dignity.

The orator spoke for the benefit of those without as well as for that of those within. He left the improvised tribune to address from the window some of the groups gathered in the courtyard. The first decree moved pronounced the deposition and impeachment of Louis Napoleon; it was voted, drawn up in haste, and signed without a moment's loss.

The quaestors' proposal, a singular parody of

the past, was the time not only carried unanimously, but immediately put into practice.

Article 32 of the Constitution which had ceased to live recovered one hour of fictitious existence. General Oudinot was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the troops and the National Guard of Paris. M. Tamisier, a member of the Mountain, was named his colleague as a corrective to the origin of the general and in order to make the Parisian democracy swallow his name, which was by no means popular with it.

Then followed another decree convoking the High Court of Justice to try Napoleon and his accomplices. All those proposals were voted on trust, almost without being heard, so great were both the noise and the excitement.

After those essential votes, which in themselves constituted the vindication of a right that no longer existed, and gave form, as it were, to the revolt against accomplished facts, came on matters of detail. A decree was voted ordering General Magnan and all the officers of the army of Paris to come and place themselves at the disposal of the Assembly. The immediate liberation of all the arrested ex-members was also voted. The tenth legion of the National Guard was ordered, until something better turned up, to guard and

defend this spectre of the Assembly. Furthermore the printing of all these improvisations was voted; but there came not the shadow of a general to submit, nor of a National Guard to defend; and worse than all, there was no printing-press available. As for the liberation of the arrested ex-members, the idea of trying the doors of Mazas by coercion, cajoling, or connivance was not seriously entertained. The whole attempt, ardent as it was, remained fruitless.

This visible impotency did not, however, discourage the most excited in the meeting. The acrimony of their language only increased. It was a medley of imprecations against the victorious power, a mixture of impracticable proposals; and to make this parliamentary hullabaloo complete, each motion was hailed with interminable cheers of "Vive la République!" "Vive la Constitution!"

As is ever the case in similar paroxysms, the language of reason failed to make itself heard. Whosoever would have dared to counsel wisdom would have been accused of treachery. Several members of the Right asked in vain to be heard; it went against their grain to accept a share in such excesses. How false their situation was becoming! To try to stem the current was not possible; to leave the sitting would have exposed them to the

charge of desertion. Hence they were bound *volens volens* to suffer, in appearance at least, the complicity of an attitude which they could but blame as imprudent and useless.

As the hour advanced the turbulent became more excited still. They could not but know that the Prefecture of Police was kept informed of the doings at the 10th arrondissement. They expected the appearance of a commissary of police and his soldiers at any moment. They wished at all risks, and before the anticipated break up of the meeting, to carry the principal resolutions and to commit their famous decretal improvisations to print.

Towards twelve o'clock there was a stir amongst the crowd, caused by the arrival of two commissaries of police, MM. Lemoine Tacherat and Barlet, who, invested with their official scarfs, presented themselves at the door of the *mairie*. This door was kept by a few National Guards who had taken sides with the Assembly, so they were obliged to come to, a parley, and that amidst a hooting, jostling, hostile crowd. Nevertheless their authority prevailed, and they were just going up to the first-floor when they were reinforced by two companies of Vincennes rifles, which General Magnan had despatched to their aid.

The attitude of the meeting was such as to leave little hope of matters terminating as peaceably as they had done at the Rue des Pyramides, at Count Daru's, and at the Palais-Bourbon. A peaceable solution, a tranquil separation, was not to be looked for. Measures had to be taken to use force, and in the event of a refusal to disperse, to arrest the two hundred ex-members assembled at that moment. A great many more troops than General Magnan had sent were required for this. The officer in command of the two companies and the commissaries of police decided, the former to send for reinforcements, the latter to ask for further instructions from the Prefect of Police.

Meanwhile General Oudinot essayed the prestige of his new dignity of Commander-in-Chief of the army of Paris. He announced his appointment to the officer in command of the rifles, and requested him to assume the defence of the Assembly, and to submit to his order. The omnipotence of strict obedience to instructions showed itself in all its glory at that moment. The captain resisted the general without the least ceremony. He showed himself strong in what he considered to be his right, and to the persistent casuistry of the members and to General Oudinot alike he opposed the imperturbable answer of an obstinate refusal to

swerve one inch from what he felt to be his duty. As for the two commissaries, whom they had equally tried to win to their designs, they expressed themselves politely but in so peremptory a fashion that it was considered useless to engage in a new colloquy with them.

The frequent news of the doings at the 10th arrondissement had enabled me to measure the danger of this meeting. If the resolutions that had been passed there became known to the army, they might lead to hesitation on the latter's part. If they were communicated to the inhabitants of the capital they might expose us to the gravest complications.

These débris of legality, collected by the very men who the night previous were still its authorized depositaries, might become a rallying-point for the revolt. At a given moment two constituted governments might find themselves face to face; the natural consequence would be civil war. It was because I saw matters in that light that I had urgently requested General Magnan to have the two commissaries backed up by an imposing force, so as to crush this manifestation at its birth. Two companies would have been insufficient even at the beginning, let alone at the moment when it was absolutely necessary to act.



Time was precious ; to apply once more to the commander of the army of Paris was to expose myself to great delays. I made up my mind to use my right of direct requisition, and requested General Forey to move with his troops and guns upon the *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement. I at the same time informed General Magnan and the Minister for War of the grave nature of the incident and of what I had done to cut it short. Immediately on receipt of my advice, General de Saint-Arnaud ordered General Magnan to proceed in person to the spot and to take the most energetic measures. But before the General could comply with this order, General Forey had accomplished his mission, and the resistance of the two hundred and eighteen ex-members was at an end.\*

How had this mission been accomplished? In the interval between the appearance of the two companies of rifles and the arrival of General Forey, the mob had increased ; some National Guards, with their arms upon them, had repaired to the *mairie*, and proffered the most violent

\* In the various publications that have treated of the events of the 2nd December, the number of representatives present at the *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement has not always been given exactly. The number 218 must be considered as absolutely correct. It has been borrowed from the report of the Commissary Lemome Tacherat, who had taken measures to inform me with the utmost accuracy.

menaces. Our two commissaries, who remained to watch matters, had to sustain a downright siege. Their attitude was energetic enough; but to the insults heaped upon them they could only oppose a firm and dignified behaviour. In attempting to act prematurely they would only have exposed themselves to failure; hence they prudently elected to wait for reinforcements.

It was known in the improvised parliament that fresh troops had been asked for. It was not difficult to guess that they would be chosen in such a manner as to leave no hope of gaining their co-operation and of placing them under the orders of General Oudinot. It was even said that General Magnan would lead the expedition in person. Nothing but submission remained. The appearance of the head of General Forey's columns dispelled all preparations for resistance in a moment. The tumult became indescribable, and the two vice-presidents combined were powerless to restore silence. In extenuation of the Right, it should be said once more that, except a few of its members, it submitted to, rather than participated in, this very Babel of the most discordant cries, insults, and objurgations. The group of the Mountain was in its real element; vociferations, threats, and violence were within their ordinary

method of transacting business. One may imagine what it must have been at such a time.

I had specially enjoined General Forey to surround the block of buildings in the midst of which the *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement was situated; it was the first thing he did. Once that movement executed, he proceeded, at the head of a strong detachment, to the courtyard of the *mairie*, and our two commissaries were enabled to immediately execute the orders I had just transmitted to them.

At the outset, when we might still hope that the meeting at the 10th arrondissement would assume no more offensive aspect than those already dispersed, I had instructed my two commissaries to arrest no ex-members save those who made themselves conspicuous by their violent behaviour or language, or by their refusal to separate; but after the resolutions passed by the meeting, after their motions for the impeachment of Louis Napoleon, after their decree of nomination of a commander-in-chief of the army of Paris, after their convocation of the High Court of Justice, matters could not be allowed to terminate in that way. So I issued the following orders—"To summon the meeting to immediately suspend the sitting, and when once the ex-members had left the apartment and were

no longer in a compact body, to advise the most peaceful to go their various ways, to lay hands on all the Mountaineers, and afterwards on such members of the Right as had distinguished themselves by their show of irritation." Our commissaries possessed all the requisites necessary for this rapid selection; in fact, the members had pointed themselves out, as it were. Those who threatened the soldiers and our commissaries were to be arrested; there were about sixty of them. Those who remained calm, who only approved rather than be stigmatized as deserters, would be invited to retire. They could not be dangerous at large; whilst if they remained on our hands they would, from their very numbers, be a source of embarrassment to us. I had communicated to General Forey first, afterwards to General de Saint-Arnaud, my instructions to the commissaries of police, and they in turn, and as an additional precaution, had transmitted the same orders to the officers entrusted with the operations.

At the entrance of General Forey into the courtyard, our commissaries, followed by a strong detachment of troops, presented themselves once more in the apartment where the sitting was held. Part of the detachment accompanied them; the remainder took up its position on the staircase. We must

give up all attempt to describe the tumult that ensued. The cries, the insults, the threats of the Mountaineers fell fast and furious upon the agents of public authority, and the voice of the president remained for a long while powerless to make itself heard. But silence was restored at last. After which M. Lemoine Tacherat acquainted the meeting with the mission he had come to execute. Proceeding methodically, he at first spoke only of the immediate evacuation of the apartment where the sitting was held. But at this first injunction a downright storm of indignation burst anew over the apartment. At the request of the president the two commissaries advanced towards the table, and M. Benoist d'Azy informed them that in the name of the Assembly he would read Article 68 of the Constitution to them.

After reading this M. Benoist d'Azy added that it was in virtue of this Article 68 that the Assembly, refused access to their ordinary place of meeting, had met at the *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement, and that it had passed the decree of forfeiture which he also proposed to read.

The decree was couched in the following terms.

“FRENCH REPUBLIC.

“The National Assembly sitting in extraordinary at the *mairie* of the tenth arrondissement,

“Considering Article 68 of the Constitution ;

“Considering that the National Assembly is obstructed by an act of violence in the execution of its mission ;

“Decrees—

“Louis Napoleon to have forfeited his functions of President of the Republic. All citizens are bound to refuse him obedience.

“The executive power devolves by right to the National Assembly.

“The judges of the High Court are bound to meet immediately, on the penalty of forfeiture of their office. The jury is convoked to proceed to the trial of the President and his accomplices.

“In pursuance of which all functionaries, depositaries of the public forces and of authority, are summoned to obey the requisitions made in the name of the Assembly under penalty of forfeiture and high treason.

“Deliberated and voted, etc., etc. . . .”

“It is in virtue of this decree,” added M. Benoist d’Azy, “that the Assembly commands you to obey its requisitions. At this hour there exists in France but one lawful authority, and that is the National Assembly in whose presence you are—it is in its name that I summon you to obey.” I had impressed upon M. Lemoine Tacherat the necessity

of using towards the Assembly all the consideration compatible with the execution of his mission. By thus allowing it to engage in discussion he exceeded my instructions. He would have done better to put the question immediately in a summary fashion, and to simply request the meeting to disperse. At the worst he might have replied to MM. Benoist d' Azy and Oudinot insisting upon their qualities, the one as President of the Assembly, the other as Commander-in-Chief of the army of Paris, "The only lawful President of the Assembly is M. Dupin, who absolutely declined to convoke the Assembly. The sole Commander-in-Chief of the army of Paris is General Magnan, who at this very moment sends his troops to clear the apartment in which you are assembled. A fraction of the Assembly, not numbering by a great many half *plus* one of its members, the number constitutionally required to render its resolutions valid, possesses no qualities to deliberate lawfully. Its pretended decrees are therefore, according to the law, null and void. They not only constitute a revolt against the existing public power, they are from every point of view a violation of the Constitution which they wrongfully invoke. It is nothing less than usurpation." In fact there remained something like five hundred ex-members at large in Paris. Who would have maintained

hat the real majority of the Chamber was not sitting anywhere at that moment? Might not that majority on its side have taken some different resolution? To what then in fact did those decrees at the 10th arrondissement amount? Even to this Assembly, of which those decrees pretended to make the defence, they were no longer anything but the proofs of an illegal manifestation, coming from a minority that usurped the right of the majority and violated the Constitution.

But however peremptory the arguments to oppose to the threats of the ex-members, it would have been better to engage in no discussion and to clearly summon the meeting to disperse. The second commissary, M. Barlet, believing that this scene should not be prolonged, spoke at last, and told M. Benoist d'Azy that he was compelled to carry out the orders he had received; that he summoned the meeting to disperse immediately. The officer commanding the detachment, who had entered the apartment with the two commissaries, had received similar instructions; he added his injunction to the commissaries'. But the same method that had so fruitlessly been used with the commissaries was attempted with the military authority. Once more Article 68 and the decree of deposition were read. To this General Oudinot



added the enumeration of his grade and his new authority, and invited the officer in charge of the detachment to obey him. Firm in the application of the military laws, the officer replied that he only knew his chief, that he had received orders to clear the apartment, to have those who refused to leave arrested, and that he repeated his summons to the meeting to disperse. "We'll all go to Mazas sooner than do it," was the cry of fifty of the most turbulent of the Mountain; and they draped themselves in the inviolability of the Assembly. "They'll have to force us," said some; "to drag us from our seats," said others, "they'll have to use violence, we wish them to do so."

At last the two commissaries went up to MM. Benoist d'Azy and Vitet, seated at the table, lightly laid their hands on the latter's shoulders, and invited them to follow. At a sign from the two ex-Vice-Presidents all resistance ceased. The members left their seats, descended the grand staircase of the *mairie*, placed themselves between the two rows of soldiers, and started on their way. The leaders of the meeting, above all the members of the Mountain, were under the impression that they would be taken to Mazas, and asked for nothing better than thus to afford the whole of Paris the spectacle of their resistance. Their dis-

appointment may be imagined when they saw themselves going in the direction of the Quai d'Orsay. And still it must be admitted that this sojourn on the Quai d'Orsay, situated in the centre of the inhabited quarters, was by much preferable to Mazas for those who fostered the secret hope of getting back to their homes before nightfall.

Why had the barracks of the Quai d'Orsay been substituted for Mazas, originally arranged upon as the place of confinement for the members arrested at the 10th arrondissement? Reasons of prudence had induced this change of plan. Close to the *mairie* we had a sufficient number of carriages waiting to take about fifty of the ex-members to Mazas. Our provision had not extended beyond that, and it would have taken too long to wait for the number of conveyances required for two hundred and eighty people. Seeing that we could not very well put some in coaches and let others go on foot, we had no alternative but to march the whole of the column to its destination on foot. It will be easily understood that to let a similar procession cross the whole of Paris would have been exposing ourselves to complications it was more prudent to avoid. The moment circumstances had compelled us to give up the idea of partial arrests Mazas became impossible, and the barracks of the

Quai d'Orsay was the nearest and most suitable as a temporary place of confinement.

At about two o'clock the column started and left the *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement. General Forey marched at its head with his staff and a company of Vincennes rifles. Then came the representatives between a double row of soldiers of the line. Two more companies closed the procession. The journey offered no incident worthy of notice. The spectators showed the most complete indifference. At three o'clock the large gates of the barracks on the Quai d'Orsay swung back on their hinges, and our captives took possession of their temporary lodgings in a sufficiently jolly manner.

Those last echoes of the irritation of the various parties had but a limited effect outside. At the very doors of the meetings of which we have spoken the Prince reviewed the troops. At the head of a numerous staff he crossed the Place de la Concorde, the Tuileries gardens, the Pont Royal, and the Quai d'Orsay. The reception was most enthusiastic on the part of the army. The cries of "Vive Napoléon ! Vive l'Empereur !" might have been heard in the very rooms where the obstinate members of the dissolved Assembly were holding their sittings, and have supplied the hint to submit.

Prince Jérôme, the brother of Napoleon I., had kept his word. Notwithstanding his being still very ill, he had repaired to the Elysée, and went through the review by the side of his nephew; it was like an apparition of the first Empire greeting the advent of the new Empire at its dawn. Behind the old King of Westphalia came Generals Count de Flahaut, Count Roguet, de Bourjoly, Excelmans; then the pleiad of young officers belonging to the military household of the Prince, who under various aspects had shown themselves his useful and devoted auxiliaries, Fleury, Edgard Ney, Marquis de Toulangeon, Count de Menneval, Baron Lepie, &c.

One man especially amongst this brilliant suite, Colonel Fleury, must have felt great joy mixed with pardonable pride. He might have said to himself, "This army is my work." In fact for more than a year, since it had become patent that the conflict between the two great powers could only be solved by an appeal to force, the Prince had been compelled to gather around him an army devoted to his cause. Colonel Fleury had served in Africa; the fame of his bravery as much as the charm of his intellect had created a good many affectionate and intimate relations between himself and the generals and superior officers of the army.

Endowed with rare penetration, he knew every one's weak and strong side. He knew to what degree such and such an officer, such and such a regiment could be relied upon; one might say that, thanks to his recollections of Africa, he had chosen one by one almost the whole of the generals of the army of Paris. The most important of his selections was assuredly that of General de Saint-Arnaud. It was, in fact, the young colonel who, at his own suggestion, had been charged by the Prince to go and seek General de Saint-Arnaud in Africa and to ascertain his feelings with regard to the great events that might eventually take place, and to finally prevail upon him to promise his co-operation. It was also Colonel Fleury who had designated the regiments that garrisoned Paris on the 2nd December; and his choice had been a good one. He had not confined his action to these successive suggestions. He was, as it were, the Minister for War where there was a question of persons. It was to him that among the higher grades in the army the petitions were addressed to obtain advancement or with reference to the garrisoning of Paris. Such requests provided Colonel Fleury with the opportunity of gaining many friends to his Prince. He never neglected one, and he very cleverly kept the

sacred fire burning in the heart of those young generals whose fortunes he had befriended. Ministers for War came and went, Colonel Fleury remained. Hence he was the real creator of this army of Paris. This modification in the composition of the army of Paris had been the more necessary, seeing that during the period of his command General Changarnier had succeeded in gaining much sympathetic devotion for himself among the officers. We know to what proofs he wished to expose them; and one cannot blame Louis Napoleon for having profited by his right in order to surround himself also with men disposed to support rather than to betray him. Still the eliminations were not as complete as they should have been; the kind heart of the Prince had been the obstacle. He was prone to believe too easily in the protestations of devotion, especially when coming from a soldier, and it was entirely owing to himself that there still remained in Paris a few regiments at whose heads were chiefs devoted to General Changarnier. After the review of the troops on the Quai d'Orsay, and in consequence of an incident that had scarcely been noticed by any one save the Minister for War, a colonel was placed on non-activity; but this was one of the rare exceptions which it was but natural to apprehend.

Taken as a whole the manifestation that greeted the Prince on his leaving the Elysée was decidedly favourable. The army applauded the accomplished facts, and if among the population there was a pretty equal balance between the cries of "Vive la République" and "Vive Napoléon," there remained also a silent mass from which no hostility was to be feared.

While the dissolved Assembly endeavoured to rally at the *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement, another grave contingency had been revealed to me. The High Court of Justice, in pursuance of Article 118 of the Constitution, had its seat at the Palace of Justice.\* It had waited neither for the decree of deposition and impeachment nor for the invitation of the sham Assembly that at the 10th arrondissement had for a moment usurped a right it had not to assemble. The hurry to meet it had thus displayed, without any previous invitation whatsoever, gave us the measure of its intentions. It was

\* We have already quoted Article 68 of the Constitution, we will only recall here its provisions relative to the High Court of Justice which, in the event of the dissolution of the Assembly by the President of the Republic, ran as follows. "The judges of the High Court of Justice shall immediately assemble on the penalty of forfeiture; they convoke the jury in the spot designated by them to proceed to the trial of the President and his accomplices. They themselves nominate the magistrates entrusted with the functions of the public ministry (prosecution)."

beyond doubt that we had to apprehend the most hostile resolutions on its part.

The danger was naturally foreseen, and accordingly I had taken the necessary measures from an early hour to get to know the intentions of the High Court. Every one of its members was, without knowing it, the object of a special surveillance; but their number was so limited that little hope was left of fathoming their designs. Hence we were reduced to draw from the facts as a whole inductions that might at least put us on the scent of their projects. Being informed first of the arrival of one of the members of the High Court at the Palace of Justice, then of the arrival of a second, then at a few minutes' interval of the successive arrival of all the members, I was bound to conclude that the High Court intended to hold a sitting. Hesitation would be fatal; we must not give this high constitutional tribunal the time to deliberate and to formulate a decision which would not have failed to find its immediate way to the walls of Paris and to be made use of against us. We might at the same time find ourselves confronted by a series of provocations to revolt possessing the semblance of legality, some proceeding from the *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement, others from the High Court.



Determined to break down all obstacles that might compromise our success, I made up my mind to the most energetic measures with regard to the High Court. I summoned one of my commissaries, had a company of the Republican Guard called out to back his authority, and ordered him to proceed immediately to the Palace of Justice and to the audience chamber of the High Court, to suspend the sitting, to seize all the documents, and to arrest if necessary such members as refused to obey his summons. At the same time I handed him a letter, the contents of which I communicated to him, which on entering the court he was to present to the President. He was to be guided by the reply.

A few minutes after leaving my room the commissary entered the audience chamber of the High Court followed by the company of the Republican Guard, which, headed by its drummer, took up a position facing the magistrates. The commissary handed the letter subjoined to the Councillor-President.

*"Paris, 2nd December, 1.45 P.M.*

"MONSIEUR LE PRÉSIDENT,

"There is no longer a High Court of Justice. I trust that you will sympathize with the sentiment

that guides me in requesting you to suspend the sitting.

“Please to accept, M. le Président, the assurance of my profound respect.

“The Prefect of Police,

“DE MAUPAS.”

No resistance was attempted. Councillor-President Hardouin immediately declared the sitting closed. Every one of the members left the audience chamber and the Palace. A few moments afterwards the commissary, bringing me the few papers seized on the judges' table, gave an account of his mission. He had met with no resistance nor objection from the members of the High Court; his impression was that those magistrates experienced not the least regret in seeing their task interrupted by the display of physical force.

Indeed, in referring to the terms of Article 68, it will be seen that the members of the High Court were bound, under the present circumstances, to assemble spontaneously “under the penalty of forfeiture.” If action had its perils, inaction involved a terrible responsibility. The High Court therefore had acted very prudently in submitting to the Constitution, but it was certain—and thus far

the impression of the commissary was correct—that far from blaming the Prefect for the measures he had taken with regard to them, the magistrates, absolved by him from all responsibility, accepted with satisfaction the peaceful solution of the incident.

The news of the dissolution of the High Court and the tidings of the evacuation of the *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement arrived about the same time. There had lain our two greatest perils. The victory over popular uprisings and barricades is easy enough with energetic measures, with sufficient forces, with bayonets and cannon; but in those supreme moments when trouble prevails everywhere, when the popular mind becomes very susceptible, one cannot possibly foresee the effect produced on it by manifestations of resistance emanating from the great bodies of the State. At such moments so many people seek to know which is the stronger side so as to rally to it, that, in order to gain them over, to increase as much as possible the number of adherents, one must break down everything that breeds doubt; in short, the display of one's force must be made as conclusive as possible. It was on this conviction that I had shaped my conduct.

What guidance could the undecided spectator,

still seeking the path to follow, derive from the march of events? What was our situation, what that of our adversaries? Let us sum up in a few words the reply to this double question.

Our principal adversaries, the possible leaders of an uprising, of a diversion of the army, were at Mazas, and very efficiently guarded. The Palace of the Assembly was occupied by our troops, the most hostile representatives were in our power. The High Court of Justice had been dissolved; the attempts to reassemble had been immediately frustrated. The army showed itself too firm to be shaken, its chiefs showed a significant enthusiasm. Such was our balance sheet. Everything was in our favour.

What on the other hand could our adversaries show? Their meetings of ex-members dispersed at M. Barrot's, at M. Crémieux's, at M. Yvan's, at Count Daru's, at the hall of the Pyramides, at the hall Martel, at the *mairie* of the 10th—in short, miscarriage of all their attempts at resistance—such was the result of their first day. The chances were no longer equal.

But it is true we were only at the beginning, and if everything up till now was calculated to inspire us with confidence, it would have been rash indeed to be betrayed into false security. In

presence of an enemy still standing, openly preparing to give us battle, we were bound to maintain and follow up our advantages until he had visibly abdicated and laid down his arms.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### FIRST GATHERINGS.

M. de Morny tries to form a Ministry.—My Envoy to the Elysée — The Ministry he brings back from it.—The Guardin Incident.— Paris from 11 A.M. to 11 P.M.—First Barricades.—The Insurgents want to ring the Tocsin.—Germs of Dissent between the Prefecture of Police and the Military Authorities.

IF to the Prince, to General de Saint-Arnaud and to myself the success hoped for from the beginning was henceforth certain, provided we persevered in our energetic measures, our confidence was by no means completely shared by the political men on whom we had relied to form a Cabinet on the morning of the 2nd December. While General de Saint-Arnaud and I were engaged in a hand-to-hand struggle with the complications of which I gave a summary above, M. de Morny tried to constitute a Ministry. This Ministry failed to make its appearance. Since the morning several reports had told me of the surprise expressed by the people at not seeing the composition of the new Ministry placarded by the side of the proclamations. People supposed that this could only be a delay of a few hours, never-

theless it was expected with some impatience. At midday my agents informed me that this delay had led to evil-tongued comments. At two o'clock, being as far advanced as ever, I sent M. de Morny the following telegraphic message:—

“Prefect of Police to Minister of the Interior.

“2nd December, 2 10 P.M.

“How is it that the composition of the Cabinet is not posted up as yet? “DE MAUPAS.”

I received the following answer:—

“Minister of the Interior to Prefect of Police.

“2.20 P.M.

“It is not composed yet; the moment it is we shall post it up. “DE MORNÿ.”

My agents still more persistently calling my attention to the bad impression produced by the absence of a Ministry, I addressed another message to M. de Morny telling him to hurry the matter:—

“Prefect of Police to Minister of the Interior.

“2nd December, 3.5 P.M.

“We must have a Ministry, even if not complete—we *must*. “DE MAUPAS.”

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To this message I received the following answer.

“Minister of the Interior to Prefect of Police.

“*2nd December, 3 10 P.M.*

“The Minister is occupied with it. The Ministry will probably be complete to-night.

“DE MORNY.”

This last message seemed to indicate that there were still difficulties in the way, rather than to promise a solution. I thought the best thing to do was to send direct to the Elysée to urge on the matter. I had with me a capable and intelligent young officer, who at present occupies a very high position in the army. I entrusted him with the mission of calling upon the Prince and of impressing upon him the urgent necessity of an immediate composition of a Ministry, of setting the public mind at rest, of inspiring confidence, and of cutting short the lamentable comments that floated about with reference to this delay. I recommended my young envoy the most respectful but greatest persistency, and to bring me back a Ministry the composition of which I was authorised to announce immediately. In that way it might have been known at night. But after having waited a long while my envoy came back without a definite answer. “The Ministry is being got together, I shall send its



composition before night to the Prefect of Police," the Prince had said. Night time came, and receiving no communication from the Elysée, I sent a second time. Nothing was definitely settled, the future Ministers had given their adhesion separately, but they were to meet once more before the publication of their names in the *Moniteur*. This after all was but a formality, and therefore the Prince hesitated no longer to communicate the names to me. At nine o'clock my young envoy brought me the list. It had been written in his presence by the Prince himself. I received at the same time an order to have the composition of the Ministry printed and placarded. It was printed during the night, and at daybreak the following announcement was on every wall in Paris.

"PREFECTURE OF POLICE,  
"PARIS, 3rd December, 1851.

"Composition of the Ministry.

"MM. COUNT DE MORNAY, Interior ;  
FOULD, Finances ;  
ROUHER, Justice ;  
MAGNE, Public Works ;  
GENERAL DE SAINT-ARNAUD, War ;  
DUCOS, Marine ;  
MARQUIS DE TURGOT, Foreign Affairs ;

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MM. LEFÈVRE DURUFLÉ, Commerce ;  
FOURTOUL, Public Education.

“ Certified as correct,

“ The Prefect of Police, DE MAUPAS.”

At the Ministry of the Interior during this eventful day, the greater part of the time had been spent in negotiations necessary to the formation of a Ministry, and the drawing up of a circular to the prefects. The Minister acquainted them with what had occurred, and asked them for an energetic co-operation.

M. de Morny had many friends in Paris, especially among men of business and journalists. Part of his day had been taken up with their reception, and now and again they gave him some belated or interested information which was not of a nature to inspire him very usefully. It was probably some rival of M. de Girardin who was alarmed by the doings of the latter, and made M. de Morny write the dispatch which we quote below, if only to show how much value could be attached to the fictitious dispatches published by a certain personage, supposed to be behind the scenes—M. Véron.

“ Minister of the Interior to Prefect of Police.

“ *2nd December, 1.55 P M.*

“ Have M. de Girardin watched very closely. It

is said that he has already attempted to incite the troops.

“DE MORNY.”

I was perfectly well informed about the attitude of M. de Girardin, which did not seem to me to justify any severe measures. Consequently I had neither answered nor taken any further notice of this dispatch. Nevertheless the question, of small importance assuredly, seemed to worry the Minister of the Interior, and during the evening we exchanged the following messages on the subject.

“Minister of the Interior to Prefect of Police.

“*2nd December, 6 10 P.M.*

“The Minister begs to call the Prefect’s attention to M. Emile de Girardin, and requests that he may be arrested at the first opportunity.

“DE MORNY.”

“Prefect of Police to Minister of the Interior.

“*2nd December, 6.15 P M*

“Is it wise to resort to this measure ?

“DE MAUPAS.”

“Minister of the Interior to Prefect of Police.

“*2nd December, 6 25 P M*

“If he is hostile, it’s no use to hesitate.

“DE MORNY.”

In fact I did not hesitate; I left M. de Girardin at large. His arrest at that moment would have been a superfluous piece of severity, and we were obliged to be severe enough, where it was absolutely necessary, not to engage in fancy measures. Consequently I confined myself to have M. de Girardin watched as heretofore, and that was all.

While on the subject of M. de Girardin let us note that M. Véron, who mentions the incident in his "*Mémoires d'un Bourgeois de Paris*," translates the despatches we have just given in the following fashion :—

"The Minister of the Interior to Prefect of Police.

"The Minister has grave reasons not to have M. Emile de Girardin molested.

"DE MORNY."

It is scarcely possible to travesty the truth with more unconcern. However, when people once start inventing they are not particular as to the exact limits, and this *Bourgeois de Paris* set himself none in his novel. We have given an exact statement of the situation. The truth with regard to it was not known as yet during the day of the 2nd December by the Paris population. Attempts at resistance on the part of the ex-members and

wholesale arrests were vaguely spoken of, but nothing was clearly specified in those rumours. The sole act of lawful resistance about which doubt was no longer possible was the decision of the High Court of Justice. Written copies of it were circulated, which read as follows :—

“ Decision of the High Court of Justice.

“ By virtue of Article 68 of the Constitution the High Court of Justice declares Louis Napoleon charged with the crime of high treason.

“ And convokes the national jury to proceed without delay to his judgment. M. Councillor Renouard is entrusted with the duty of the prosecution before the High Court.

“ Given in Paris the 2nd December, 1851.

“ HARDOUIN, *President*.

“ DELAPLACE, PATAILLE, MOREAU (de la Seine),  
GAUCHY, QUESNAULT, *Judges*.”

This decree was written in the form of a placard ; and it was intended to post it on the walls of Paris during the night of the 2nd-3rd December.

In the state of comparative uncertainty in which the mass of the population found themselves they held back. We have already alluded to the satisfactory aspect of Paris during the morning. Less favourable symptoms revealed themselves as

the day wore on. It became certain that a storm was brewing, for one might detect its ordinary precursors.

Towards eleven o'clock the crowds became very dense; their attitude, save a few exceptions, was no longer sympathetic. Several men among them began to show their hostility. There was a good deal of speechifying, and, of course, it all counselled revolt. In the quarters where the demagogic element prevailed the workmen were leaving off work. At two o'clock several crowds were dispersed by the police in the 7th arrondissement.

At a quarter-past two a band of about a hundred came marching along the Rue St. Antoine singing the *Marseillaise*. Coming out on the Boulevard Beaumarchais they came upon a squad of police, and dispersed without resistance.

At half-past four there was a mass movement towards the open space in the Rue St. Martin (now the Square des Arts et Métiers), the Rue du Temple, the Portes St. Denis and St. Martin.

At seven o'clock cries of "Down with the traitors! Down with Louis Napoleon! Vive la République!" were heard, and several people were arrested on the boulevards. A little later about twelve hundred forbidding-looking figures came down the Rue St.

Martin singing the *Marseillaise* and uttering threats of violence. A similar manifestation took place in the Rue Chapon and in the Rue du Temple, only instead of the *Marseillaise* the *Chant du Départ* was intoned. But the refrain to those quasi-patriotic hymns was the same everywhere : "Down with the dictator ! Down with the traitors ! and Vive la République !" was bellowed rather than shouted.

What meant those noisy processions, threatening no doubt, but by no means aggressive ? It was easy enough to fathom their aim. They wanted to give Paris a revolutionary aspect ; they hoped by marching along like this through the populous quarters to make the workmen shake off their indifference, to imbue them with an ardour absent up till now. Nothing in the stage arrangement to this effect had been neglected, and behind the braying columns which excited curiosity, if not interest, came the street orators stumping the groups the tumult had brought together, and explaining to them that the moment had come to take up arms. There was no attempt at secrecy ; the rendezvous was fixed for next morning, 3rd December, at seven o'clock, on the Place de la Bastille.

At nine o'clock in the evening hostile gatherings began to take place in the better quarters. On the

Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle the police were compelled to disperse several very threatening groups, a great many arrests were made, and not a few of those arrested had arms upon them.

At ten o'clock on the Boulevard des Italiens, distinguished as a rule for elegant rather than riotous propensities, a group of intoxicated individuals sang the *Marseillaise* and called upon the people to take up arms. In the Rue du Sentier aggression commenced, and the police had great trouble in getting a non-commissioned officer of gendarmerie out of the insurgents' hands.

Finally, between half-past ten and eleven, things looked very threatening, but principally between the Hôtel de Ville and the Bastille. Near the Porte St. Martin a regiment was hissed as it passed. Recourse to force became necessary, as at every moment one might expect barricades to be thrown up. But the signal to begin had not as yet been given; the insurgents did not feel themselves sufficiently numerous. Night was counted on to stimulate the indifferent, and to congregate a force that would allow of the commencing of the struggle.

Strong pickets patrolled the boulevards and easily got the better of some belated groups. The great arteries became free and deserted, the narrow and dark back streets where no troops were sent



remained the sole refuge of the rioters, who wanted to take advantage of the night to prepare the combat for the next day.

From midnight to two o'clock in the morning we were informed of barricades being begun in the St. Martin and St. Denis quarters. I had also learned that the insurgents meant to move upon the churches to sound the tocsin. The tocsin always produces a terrible impression upon the multitude. The dirge-like revelation of a great calamity has preserved its traditional prestige, and it was imperative not to arouse this great emotion among the inhabitants of Paris, in the interests both of religion and of public tranquillity. The profanation of our sanctuaries should be prevented at all risks. Where would the bandits have stopped when once masters of our churches? The spots devoted to prayer and concord must not supply the signal for civil war and all its scourges. I had not the least doubt that the ecclesiastical authorities would willingly lend themselves to my measures; so on receiving the news of our enemies' plans I wrote to my excellent and venerable friend, Monseigneur Sibour, Archbishop of Paris.

“PARIS, 2nd December, 1851.

“MONSEIGNEUR,”

“One common feeling animates us, the wish to

save the country. The Socialists intend to get possession of your churches and to sound the tocsin. Allow me to place sufficient forces in the bell-towers to have both religion and public tranquillity respected.

Pray accept, Monseigneur, the expressions of my profound respect and affectionate devotion."

"The Prefect of Police,

"DE MAUPAS."

Our respected Archbishop eagerly accepted my offer. The threatened churches were either occupied or watched, and the ropes of the bells cut. It was time to act, for in the St. Martin quarter the insurgents had been beforehand with our agents at the door of one church. Luckily the door had resisted their first onslaught; they took to their heels at the approach of the public force, and the calamity to be apprehended was averted. As for the secret societies they actively continued their work. The ex-members who were still at large equally concerted with each other. The various conferences were sitting *en permanence*. Recruits were sought in their own homes; arms, ammunition, and above all money, were distributed lavishly. Along the whole line the watchword rang, "The call to arms is for to-morrow."

We were ready to fight, and resolved to conquer, but to the satisfaction of victory I by much preferred the moral triumph of making the battle impossible. All my efforts tended that way; my agents pursued the same aim with the most praiseworthy ardour. It is this same conviction that I wished to impress upon the army of Paris, or rather upon its chiefs. In this, however, I did not completely succeed. Between the military authorities and myself there existed a divergence of opinion with regard to the manner in which we were to operate in the streets. Later we shall see the breach widen; but even at that moment it began to show itself.

• I said to General Magnan, "Have the city patrolled throughout and keep sufficient forces on foot during the night to show our enemies their complete impotency. Take away their appetite even to begin the fight." To which the commander-in-chief of the army of Paris replied, "I have shown sufficient strength to-day to inspire them with a wholesome fear. I want to rest my men. I will get them to their barracks. If to-morrow we come upon some barricades, we will teach them a lesson they will not forget in a hurry."

The subjoined message had been inspired by the same feeling which thoroughly possessed my

mind. I wished to prevent in order not to have to repress.

“Prefect of Police to General Magnan.

“*2nd December 10.45 P M.*

“There is a middle course between keeping the whole of the garrison on foot, and not leaving a soldier in the streets. I am afraid, my dear general, that the patrols only will not suffice. Why are not you seated in my arm-chair?—you would be of my opinion in about five minutes.

“Show the imposing forces we dispose of, if it be only for a moment, and in a promenade from one end of the boulevards to the other. Our game stands too good to compromise it. To increase the obstacles for want of the simplest measure that might break them down would be doing this.

“Allow me to tell you that no one in Paris knows better than the Prefect of Police what is going on.

“I pray you, show some troops on the boulevards.

“Very faithfully yours,

“DE MAUPAS.”

We had sufficient troops. Our calculations had been made to occupy Paris day and night, while still imposing no more than eight hours' duty on the regiments engaged. Without, therefore,

fatiguing the army, my request might have been complied with ; and I maintain that if my system had been adopted not to let the rioters remove a paving-stone or overthrow a vehicle whatsoever in any part of Paris, the days of the 3rd and 4th December would have passed over like the 2nd. Protests, cries, threats, at the worst a few attempts at throwing up barricades—in one word, a great deal of noise for nothing—would have been the utmost limit of our enemy's rôle. It is to this that I wanted to reduce it.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE FIRST BARRICADES.

Departure of the ex-Members for Vincennes, Mazas, and Mont Valérien.—Their Reception in the Faubourg St. Antoine.—Death of Baudin —M. Victor Hugo's Hallucinations.

THE night of the 2nd-3rd December was replete with incidents. The stir at the Prefecture of Police was nearly as great as it had been during the day.

The first and foremost of our difficulties was the ultimate destination of the ex-members, at present under lock and key at the barracks of the Quai d'Orsay. After various communications between the Prince, the Ministers for War and the Interior, and the Prefect of Police, it was decided that the prisoners should be sent in three different directions—Vincennes, Mazas, and the Mont Valérien. Mazas was selected for those whom we meant to keep until further orders. The manner of transport was not without its difficulties; it was not easy to find a sufficient number of carriages to convey nearly two hundred persons—one might say two hundred and fifty, counting the police agents—

it being necessary that these carriages should offer some guarantees of safety. We hurriedly secured from the postal authorities the letter-carriers' vans, also some omnibuses from elsewhere; but this was not enough, and we were compelled to add three prison vans, which aroused the indignation of some of our guests at the Quai d'Orsay, especially of the sybarites of the Mountain.

Lamentations like these are somewhat out of place in such moments. War has its fortunes, its hardships even; those who provoked the war should at least put up with them without grumbling. If all our adversaries had confined themselves, as some did at M. Barrot's and M. Daru's, to a dignified and peaceable resistance, to protests, however energetic, we were resolved, and we proved it, to treat them with the utmost consideration. But after what had occurred at the *marrie* of the 10th arrondissement, after the violence indulged by this semblance of an Assembly, after the decrees of deposition and impeachment placarded on the walls of Paris, we were unmistakably at war, and they should have shown themselves resigned to some of its rigours.

Half an hour after midnight the first convoy started for Mont Valérien. It consisted of about fifty ex-members. At three o'clock sixty more

were dispatched to Mazas. At half-past five in the morning only, the last conveyances went on their way to Vincennes, and passed along the Faubourg St. Antoine just about the time when the first groups of workmen in quest of news made their appearance in the streets.

We ourselves should have some compunction to narrate in this place the unfavourable reception accorded to the ex-members when they were recognised. Happily it is M. Odilon Barrot himself, an actor in the scene, who will give us a faithful account of it.

“When we passed through the Faubourg St. Antoine,” says M. Odilon Barrot in his “*Mémoires*,”\* the workmen were beginning to go to their work. They inquired of each other who were in those carriages so well escorted. ‘Ah,’ they said, after being told who we were, ‘they are the five-and-twenty francs whom they are going to put into the jug. . . . Serve them right. . . .’ This was all the compassion shown to the elect of universal suffrage by the population of this Faubourg, so famous and so feared on account of its democratic passions.” In those significant terms was pronounced the funeral oration of the Assembly, and we can only ask ourselves by what access of

\* “*Mémoires posthumes de M. Odilon Barrot*,” vol. iv. p. 231.



sincerity this avowal comes to us from the very man who was exposing, not his life perhaps, but at least his liberty, in the noisy defence of the rights and prerogatives of this fallen power.

Then, as it is to-day, those unfortunate five-and-twenty francs had the power to excite, and not unjustly, the indignation of the people.

General de Courtigis commanded at Vincennes. At ten o'clock at night I wrote to tell him of the arrival next morning of a hundred State prisoners, so that he might get everything in readiness. This first letter only gave summary indications. It read as follows :—

“MY DEAR GENERAL,

“I send you about a hundred prisoners of State; they are the ex-representatives of the people, *who must be treated with the utmost consideration*, and not lost sight of rather than locked up. I beg you will install them in small groups in the rooms you have at your disposal, and if necessary in part of your own apartments. Sentries will be posted at their doors; the greatest vigilance should be exercised.

“Truly yours,

“DE MAUPAS.”

In consequence of this letter frequent communi-

cations had been exchanged between me and the general during the night. Thanks to his energy, everything was prepared in a wonderfully short time, and when the carriages arrived the lodgings were ready. At half-past six the doors closed upon our prisoners.

At a quarter to seven I sent the Minister of the Interior the following message :—

“Prefect of Police to Minister of the Interior.

*3rd December, 6 45 A M*

“The two hundred and eighteen ex-representatives are, with the exception of a few, at Mont Valérien, Mazas, and Vincennes. I have set some at liberty. The resolutions taken at the 10th arrondissement are in my hands. Have you thought about constituting your council of war? Is there already some disagreement among the Ministry? It would be well to let the people know that it exists by doing something. “DE MAUPAS.”

Our commissaries and superintendents had, on their side, usefully employed the night. Not a quarter of an hour went by without my receiving information of the arrest of some socialist, leader of a band, or promoter of a riot; several ex-members were among the number. My agents,

especially those who belonged to the secret societies, sent me a great many interesting reports. They mentioned that the night had been calm, but all agreed in announcing a taking to arms on the morning of the 3rd, unless very great precautions paralyzed the intentions of the leaders in time.

I kept the Government informed of the situation. I resumed it in the following dispatch which I addressed to the Elysée, the Ministers for War and the Interior, and General Magnan, respectively.

*"3rd December, 6 10 A M.*

"The night has been comparatively calm. What will the morning be? The question will be judged between seven and eight o'clock. It is certain that the chiefs of the barricades are at their posts. Will they dare take the offensive?"

"Several important members of the Mountain have started for the provinces this night, some from fear, others to carry on the propaganda. We must expect to see the resolutions taken at the 10th arrondissement by the two hundred and eighteen ex-representatives, and the pretended decision (which was not given) of the High Court of Justice, placarded and distributed throughout Paris. We shall take measures to prevent the distribution.

"Throughout the night I have made several

important arrests both of ex-members and leaders of societies. I have had entire meetings broken up in which resistance was being prepared and munitions distributed. I have had a quantity of handshells seized which were not filled yet, and of which I will send you a specimen.

“DE MAUPAS.”

It was evident that the complications we expected on the 3rd were of a nature different from those we had overcome the day before. The 2nd December we had only been in presence of moral resistance—the supreme effort of the legal institutions that were dead by now, but had tried to survive their downfall. In this effort the Mountain had still part of the Right with it; it was, as it were, its “break,” for it could not maintain this alliance, even momentarily, save at the sacrifice of its bellicose tendencies. This, and this only, was the secret of the adjournment for taking to arms. But on the 3rd December those Mountaineers who remained at large found themselves freed from this restraint, irksome to their ardour, and through them we were to be confronted with the revolt. The invoking of legal means was no longer anything but the shallowest pretext. The avowed aim was now not the restoring of the Constitution, but the triumph

of the Revolution. The reward was no longer a regular government, parliamentary, monarchical, or republican, as the case might be. The satisfaction hoped for and promised was plunder and pillage, with the crowning effort of some anarchical government, of which they were very careful not to publish the programme beforehand. We could not have found a better battle-ground; it was the struggle of 1852 anticipated by a few months only. To conquer, it was only necessary to know how to use our forces, but it was imperative not to fall asleep amid a false security, as was done for a moment. Fortunately we were strong enough to be able to allow ourselves some blunders, and we shall soon see that those who committed them knew how to retrieve them valiantly.

In expectation of what was coming to us from the side of the Faubourg St. Antoine, several groups of agents posted themselves at a quarter to seven in the various streets adjacent to the Place de la Bastille. They had orders not to act before the arrival of the troops. They were only to watch the leaders in such a manner as to be able to inform the military authorities on their arrival, and to enable the latter to act promptly and efficaciously.

True, General Magnan had said, "I shall occupy the Place de la Bastille to-morrow morning, the 3rd December," but the exact hour of this occupation

had not been mentioned. I had informed the general that the rioters had appointed to meet at seven o'clock. I expected the troops to take up their position at seven at the latest. At seven no troops. At half-past seven no troops. At eight o'clock no troops. Every report that came to me from the Faubourg St. Antoine denoted an increasing agitation. My men asked for support. At nine o'clock, having received no news as yet of the arrival of the military, I sent the following dispatch to General Magnan.

*"3rd December, 9 10 A M.*

"All my reports dated between seven and eight this morning tell me that barricades are being thrown up in the Faubourg St. Antoine, and that no troops are to be seen. My agents do not interfere because they have orders to await the arrival of the military. The workmen are coming down in crowds; the game has properly begun. Send troops without a moment's loss. Above all send cannon to Mazas, which is the spot aimed at. I should also like you to send me what I asked you for the Prefecture of Police.\*

"The Prefect of Police,

"DE MAUPAS."

\* What I had asked for the Prefecture of Police was to give me back the two companies of the 6th Light Infantry and four pieces of cannon that had been taken away without my knowledge. It was my duty to

Scarcely was this dispatch gone when I received the news of the arrival of General Marulaz on the Place de la Bastille. He arrived at the minute mentioned in his instructions, half-past eight. No sooner had he taken up his positions than one of my agents came to tell him that several barricades had been thrown up in the Faubourg St. Antoine. One was situated at the corner of the Rue St. Marguerite and defended by a number of representatives. Another one had been constructed a little farther down. General Marulaz immediately dispatched three companies of the 9th Light Infantry, under Major Pajol, in this direction. He himself supported the movement by a parallel one at the head of a battalion of the 4th of the Line down the Rue de Charonne, so as to debouch on this same barricade by way of the Rue de Cotte.

Arrived at the foot of it at a quarter-past nine, Major Pajol was about to give the order for its attack, when commenced a lamentable scene only too frequent in those unfortunate wars of the streets.

Invested with their insignia of office, and standing on the overthrown vehicles of which the barricade was composed, the ex-members began to harangue

protest against this state of things by claiming the forces strictly necessary to the safety of the City and the Prefecture of Police.

the troops. Among the former were Baudin, Esquiros, Malardier, Dulac, and Deflotte. "We represent the law," said the ex-members to the soldiers, "do not fire upon us; we are your brothers, we are your friends, the emissaries of the people."

The major could not allow this attempt to seduce his men to be prolonged; he ordered his column to storm the barricade. At the peril of his life this brave officer had not given the order to fire; a feeling of humanity had prevented him. He hoped to carry the obstacle without bloodshed; but the signal to fire came from the insurgents, and at the first volley a soldier fell, struck dead. The soldiers fired in their turn, and ex-representative Baudin was mortally wounded, as well as some one who seemed to command the rioters.\*

Until now we have abstained in these pages from pointing out the errors and the calumnies of the pamphlet of M. Victor Hugo entitled "L'Histoire

\* Baudin has become the legendary hero of the December revolution. Every now and then a panorama or picture representing his death is exhibited in the populous quarters. He was probably one of the few men prepared to sacrifice their lives to their principles. Not many moments before his last he appealed to a group of workmen. One of them answered: "Do you think we are going to get ourselves killed to secure you your five-and-twenty francs a-day." "Just stay a minute or so," suggested Baudin laconically, "and I'll show you how one dies at the rate of five-and-twenty francs a-day." He kept his word and afforded them the gratification — *Trans.*



d'un Crime." One cannot help asking how a mind of this calibre could have dared to publish such improbable disguises of the truth. The hope of deceiving the ignorant and the credulous can only explain the boldness of some of the inventions. But where is the man of sense who can read without a smile those thousand and one episodes which would be ridiculous, if they did not pretend to cry the truth from the housetops. Let us cite one of those scenes. The poet no doubt fancied that he was writing some melodrama when he traced the lines we are about to read, and every word of which should be weighed. Let us say first of all which part of his own exploits M. Victor Hugo wished to describe.

At the moment when his friends were fighting on the barricade of the Rue St. Marguerite, M. Victor Hugo was coming in that direction. He crossed the Place de la Bastille, and on his way met with the staff of General Marulaz, composed of the general himself and numerous officers. Two commissaries of police, two superintendents, and twenty police agents escorted this military group, ready to arrest, if necessary, any who by word or deed should attempt to provoke a disturbance.

M. Victor Hugo himself will tell us the discourse

he pretends to have addressed to General Marulaz and to those who surrounded him.

"We passed," says M. Victor Hugo, "before the group of men with big epaulets. Those men did not even pretend to see us—tactics the drift of which we were enabled to understand later on.

"The emotion I experienced the night before, at the sight of the regiment of cuirassiers, took possession of me again.\* To see before me, at a few steps, not laid low, but standing amidst the isolation of a tranquil victory, the assassins of the country, was more than I could bear; I could not contain myself. I tore off my scarf, clutched hold of it by the end, and, leaning my head and arm out of the lowered window of the carriage, I waved it in their faces, shouting, 'Soldiers, look at this scarf, it is the symbol of the law, it is the National Assembly made manifest. Wherever you see this scarf you behold the law.

"'Soldiers, Louis Napoleon kills the Republic. Defend it. Louis Napoleon is a bandit; all his accomplices will follow him to the hulks. To

\* M. Victor Hugo alludes to another episode of which he is supposed to have been the hero, as of everything he narrates. According to him he insulted with impunity a regiment of cuirassiers, who would have had the stoical patience to endure without a murmur this avalanche of invectives. This truth of the day before is in keeping with the truth of the day after.

deserve chains is to carry them. Look at the man who is at your head. You take him to be a general? He is a galley slave.'

"The soldiers seemed petrified. Some one who was there (my thanks to this generous, devoted soul) pulled back my arm and whispered, 'You'll get yourself shot.' But I heard not and listened not. I went on always waving the scarf.

" 'You who wear the dress of a general, it is to you I speak, Monsieur. You know who I am. I am a representative of the people, and I know who you are, and I have told you. You are a malefactor. And now do you wish to know my name. Here it is.' And I shouted my name to him. And I added, 'And now tell me yours.' He did not answer. I continued, 'Be it so; I have no need to know your name, but I shall know your number when you are at the hulks.'

"The man in the dress of a general drooped his head.

"The others kept silent. Still I understood those looks though they did not glance up. I beheld them drooped, and I felt that they were furious. A profound contempt got possession of me, and I passed on. What was the name of this general? I ignored it then, I ignore it now."

The name of this general we will tell you, M. Victor Hugo ; it was General Marulaz.

But M. Victor Hugo must have a poor idea of the intelligence of his readers to fancy that, apart from some poor benighted simpletons, he will succeed in making them believe that a French general would for one moment have supported such imprudent insolence without chastising it.

And those commissaries of police whom he represented elsewhere as striking and insulting every one suspected of the least sympathy with the insurrection, by what miracle were they suddenly bereft of their zeal. What miracle caused them to witness without stirring on the Place de la Bastille what elsewhere would have provoked their immediate severity? We should like M. Victor Hugo to give us the word of this strange enigma, of this contradiction, which he himself shows us without knowing it. We need not wait for the answer of the poet, for the word of the enigma is easy enough to find. Many nights passed over his recollections, and more than one dream had traversed his slumbers. It is one of those dreams he gives us. It is the sole excuse indulgence can advance.

We might borrow a hundred more burlesque scenes of the like authenticity from M. Victor Hugo's pamphlet. The poet's fairy godmother

showed herself very generous in her historical inspirations. Still we do not care to fatigue our readers any longer with them.

In those engagements in the Faubourg St. Antoine the struggle was unequal. The ex-members understood it, and took flight with their convoy of insurgents, inciting the few passers-by they met on their way to take up arms. The troops took possession of the barricade and continued their march along the Faubourg St. Antoine. In less than an hour the traffic was restored, not one of the representatives who appeared at the barricade of the Rue St. Marguerite showed himself. They had prudently taken shelter against the more violent outburst of the storm. Some were snugly ensconced in obscure corners, others with a certain number of armed workmen had locked themselves up in a large court, foiling the search of the military. They waited until the troops had retired to take up their positions of the morning and to reconstruct their barricades, but seeing the military detachments increase and remain stationary, they renounced the contest at that point.

I had dispatched an officer of the Republican Guard to the Faubourg St. Antoine, who after a rapid inspection was to give me an account of the general aspect of the neighbourhood and suggest

the measures to be taken. It is from him that I learned the incident of the barricade of the Rue St. Marguerite and the death of Baudin. He informed me at the same time of the agitated state of the Bastille quarter, and of General Marulaz's request for reinforcements. The greater part of his troops had been disposed as attacking columns in the streets of the Faubourg, and the Place de la Bastille was no longer sufficiently guarded. Accordingly I sent General Magnan the following dispatch:—

“Prefect of Police to General Magnan.

“3rd December, 10 A. M.

“The death of an ex-representative on a barricade is reported to me. It is Baudin, of the Mountain. The news was brought by an officer of the Republican Guard whom I sent to General Marulaz at the Place de la Bastille. The general demands reinforcements at once.

“DE MAUPAS.”

At eleven o'clock General Marulaz received an additional regiment, and he could occupy the Faubourg very efficiently. He immediately took his measures to prevent the rioters from throwing up barricades.

Thus ends this first skirmish of the insurrection; it had strengthened our confidence in the army.

The latter, in fact, found itself confronted by the most terrible of perils of civil war, with the attempts at seduction on the part of the chiefs of the insurgents. Officers and soldiers had remained deaf to the exhortations of the representatives of the Mountain, invested as they were with their insignia. No proof could be more conclusive—it was evident that no effort would entice our troops. Whatever complications might arise, our success was henceforth certain.

## CHAPTER XX.

### MINISTERIAL BACKSLIDING.

Fresh Attempts at Insurrection.—Ministerial Backsliding.—Two “Orders.”—Movement on Mázas.—Attempt to carry the Prefecture of Police by surprise.—What the Prefecture really is.—The Insurrection in the Centre of Paris.—General Heibillon makes Short Work of it.—New Attack and Defeat of the Insurgents.—Their Cruelties.—The Barricades of the Evening.—Divergence of Opinion between the Civil and Military Authorities.—Two unpublished Letters of General Magnan.

ONCE the barricades destroyed, the Faubourg St. Antoine was so efficiently occupied by General Marulaz that the insurrection had no chance of rallying or of taking the offensive again.

The ex-members had understood this, and towards mid-day, followed by such insurgents as they had been able to rally, moved in small groups towards the other points of Paris, the Faubourg St. Marceau, the St. Denis quarters, towards Belleville and the Medical University. Once there they endeavoured to make the most of the death of Baudin and to provoke a fresh appeal to arms. We shall soon see that if they did not succeed in obtaining all the hoped-for results, they at least succeeded in organizing a serious insurrection.



The crowds became more dense on the boulevards, on the Place de la Bourse, and above all in the neighbourhoods of the Rues St. Denis, Rambuteau, St. Martin, and du Temple. In these latter quarters the attitude was infinitely more threatening than on the previous night. The groups were fully armed, they only awaited the signal to act.

In those wars of the streets the composition of the combatants is always of two essentially different natures, the leaders and the led. The leaders recruit sometimes by threats, sometimes by the promise of great loot after the victory, a crowd of idlers and the necessitous who engage upon the battle without the least conviction, and who at the smallest incident may desert. The energetic attitude of the Government will always sensibly diminish the latter. Convinced of this, I had in the early morning asked the Minister of the Interior to publish a manifesto, signed by all his colleagues, recommending all peaceable citizens not to join any groups, and announcing the intention of the Government to disperse any and every crowd by force, and to inflict upon the insurgents taken with arms upon them the utmost rigours of the state of siege. I received no answer from M. de Morny. The sharing of this responsibility seemed

to me so natural that no hesitation about its acceptance entered my mind for a moment. I supposed that the delay in answering was entirely owing to the drawing up of the manifesto, and perhaps to the printing of the same. Imagine my surprise when, unfolding the *Moniteur*, I found in a note at the head of its columns the melancholy but real explanation of M. de Morny's silence. The note ran thus: "The Ministry is not constituted as yet; its composition will be published in a supplement to the *Moniteur* (by order)."

Hence there was not, or there was no longer, or there had perhaps never been, a Ministry. Or else it had existed only in the faith and in the desire for it of the Prince.

The Ministry of the previous night, composed partially of the men who had urged the *Coup d'État*, and who had been sitting *en permanence* in M. de Morny's private room—this *de facto* Ministry had deserted the official sanctum at the first clouds that according to their opinion overshadowed success. The decrees of the 10th arrondissement, the decision of the High Court, the impeachment of Louis Napoleon and of his accomplices—of his accomplices above all—had terrified two or three Ministers who since the previous

evening had seen their names placarded on the walls of Paris. The pusillanimous preventing the Cabinet from being completed, had in that way imposed upon their colleagues, who did not haggle over their support, the reciprocity of a refusal.

What the Ministry, prevented from motives of personal prudence, failed to do, we, General de Saint-Arnaud and I, did. At the first news of the defection of the Cabinet I had sent one of my secretaries to the Minister for War to propose to him the promulgation without delay of an "order," warning the builders and defenders of barricades of the dangers people ran if taken during a state of siege with arms upon them. I equally communicated to the Minister the copy of the "order" I had sent to be printed, and which I had immediately placarded. It ran as follows:—

"We, the Prefect of Police,

"In virtue of the decree of the 2nd December, which proclaims the state of siege throughout the first military division,

"Order as follows:—

"Art. I. All gatherings are strictly prohibited. They will be immediately dispersed by force.

"Art. II. All seditious cries, all addresses to the public, all placarding of political documents not

emanating from a regularly constituted authority, are equally forbidden.

“Art. III. The agents of the public forces will see to the execution of the present regulations.

“Given at the Prefecture of Police, the 3rd December, 1851.

“The Prefect of Police,

“DE MAUPAS.”

General de Saint-Arnaud on his part did not delay sending me his “order.” I had four thousand copies of it placarded. It was preceded by a proclamation to the inhabitants of Paris. Subjoined is the document:—

“INHABITANTS OF PARIS!

“The enemies of order and society have begun the struggle. It is not against the Government or against the elect of the nation that they fight; their aim is pillage and destruction.

“Let all good citizens combine in the name of society and of their threatened homes.

“Remain calm, inhabitants of Paris! No unnecessary idling in the streets; it obstructs the movements of the valiant soldiers who protect you by their bayonets.

“As for me, you will find me unshaken in my resolution to defend you and to maintain order.

“The Minister for War,

“Pursuant to the law on the state of siege,

“Orders :

“Every individual taken in the act of constructing or defending a barricade, or with arms upon him, shall be shot.

“The General of Division,

“Minister for War,

“DE SAINT-ARNAUD.”

Accordingly each had remained within the limits of his functions. The Prefecture's task was to disperse the gatherings. When passing from the crowds to the barricades the rôle of the army commenced.

What charges of cruelty have not those two “orders” evoked against us? What, after all, did we do, except to use our efforts to prevent the struggle or at least to make it less intense? This threatening order of General de Saint-Arnaud was scarcely carried out. The wholesale military executions have, as we shall show later on, only existed in the imagination of a few pamphleteers, at the head of whom must be placed the poet, Victor Hugo. On the contrary, as the reports of the agents of the Prefecture would show, a great number of undecided workmen, partly seduced

by the leaders of the riots, threw down their arms and went home quietly. Also, on several points where the placards had drawn attention, the idlers and curious understood the warning, and the groups broke up by themselves. It is beyond doubt that those two "orders," so violently incriminated, served to considerably diminish the number of insurgents, and consequently the number of victims.

Mazas was within a short distance of the first barricades carried in the morning by General Marulaz. The insurgents must have been sorely tempted to try to possess themselves of this place of detention, where they were sure of finding both friends and leaders; the first, among the Mountaineers who were already there in great numbers, the latter among the generals wroth with their confinement, and ready to use their authority and their courage to invest the struggle with the most formidable proportions.

When leaving the Faubourg St. Antoine, which the cannon pointed in all directions rendered untenable to the rioters, a group of them had taken the direction of Mazas. Immediately afterwards gangs of sinister-looking individuals, who only asked for arms to transform themselves into assailants, seemed to spring as it were from the ground in the

neighbourhood of the prison. The approaches to it assumed a threatening look, and the temper of the prisoners themselves was far from reassuring. They were constantly being excited by the numerous visitors, who held out hopes of near deliverance and incited them to revolt in the interior to assist the revolt from without. Colonel Thiérion asked for reinforcements, and begged me to intervene with M. de Morny to diminish the number of visiting permits.

From a craving for inopportune popularity the officials at the Interior granted nearly every applicant, who had been refused at the Prefecture of Police, permission to visit the prisoners at Mazas. Those continual comings and goings created embarrassment and peril. It should be said that M. de Morny saw the danger when pointed out to him, and immediately suspended those permissions.

As for the reinforcements, General Marülaz could not give any, seeing that he had asked for some himself. Hence I addressed to General Herbillon, who was at the Hôtel de Ville, the following letter :

“MY DEAR GENERAL,

“Please to detach one or two battalions from your brigade and to direct them immediately on Mazas, which at the present hour is becoming the

point of attack of the insurrection. Mazas has but one company to defend itself.

“Yours cordially,

“DE MAUPAS.”

At the same time that I forwarded a copy of this letter to Colonel Thiérion I sent him the most categorical instructions in the event of the complications he apprehended.

Two battalions sent by General Herbillon followed close upon my letter and charged the crowds. Thanks to the prompt relief by the military authorities, Mazas was perfectly secure again in a short time.

But Mazas had only been the butt of a prudent attempt on the insurgents' part. They came rather to watch and to second in the event of an internal disturbance than to make an attack which it was justly considered dangerous to try. They were to shift their efforts to those quarters, the narrow and tortuous streets of which formed a series of natural bastions for the assailants.

The plan, for there was a plan, was to attract the troops to the boulevards by pretended strong gatherings, and to profit by the time it would take to disperse the latter to fortify themselves in the quadrilateral formed by the Rue Montmartre, the



boulevards, the Rue du Temple, and the quays. From there, unable to attempt anything against the Hôtel de Ville, held by General Herbillon with some of the artillery and very imposing forces, a move would be made upon the Cité, which contains the Prefecture of Police, the Palace of Justice, the Conciergerie, and the Dépôt.\*

They knew that to place the Cité in a complete state of defence more troops were necessary than could be disposed of at that moment. The keeping of the bridges which gave access to the island necessitate in fact a considerable number of troops. The Pont-Neuf is indeed a strategical position of the first order; it is the easy communication between the two banks of the river, and for this reason it should in the event of war be made secure against all attack.

On the morning of the 2nd December, a battalion of the 6th Light Infantry shared with two battalions of the Republican Guard and half a battery of artillery the defence of the Cité and the Pont-Neuf. The position was occupied as it should have been. In the evening the military authorities had, as we have said already, lessened these forces by two companies of the 6th Light

\* The Conciergerie and Dépôt are one now, and serve as a place of detention for prisoners not tried.—*Trans.*

Infantry and the half a battery of artillery. Consequently several points became very weak, and a surprise party boldly led might have penetrated into the island. Once there, the insurgents might well fancy that another charge would leave them the masters of the Prefecture of Police. It would have been the luckiest of chances for the insurrection.

People should know what the Prefecture of Police really is in the hour of peril, when the peace of the capital is threatened—they should know the rôle reserved to it, and the importance it assumes. It is a government within a government, and for the time being the nature of its power becomes almost absolute. The call for immediate decision or for instantaneous action, the confidential nature of the documents that compel this action, the secrecy with regard to the aim pursued, all these necessitate the thorough emancipation of a superior direction. Comparative independence takes the place of ordinary discipline, from the force of circumstances and the dictates of reason. Practice creates this situation.

Even in normal times the Prefecture of Police is an immense mechanism. Everything connected with the public safety, the food supply, the sanitation, in one word everything that interests the

moral and material welfare of the public, comes within the final cognizance of this vast administration. But when troubles arise, when public tranquillity is in danger, when insurrection lifts its head, when war covers the streets with gore, then the incessant obligations, the formidable responsibilities increase a thousandfold for the Prefect of Police. A seditious movement is never altogether spontaneous; a cause, or at least a pretext, produces the germ, an understanding somewhere, that is to say a plot, develops it, conspiracy organises and leads it until the day of action. It is this hidden gestation that has to be watched. It is in the office of the Prefect of Police itself that the first glare of the movement that seeks to burst into light shows itself. It is there that one by one the wires of the intrigue are revealed. The various disclosures are heaped side by side, and through them the future may be foretold; the eve foresees the morrow; the Prefecture becomes a storehouse of information.

On one side are the names of the conspirators and those who watch them, their places of residence, the spots where they meet, the plans they hatch, the means they dispose of, the contingencies on which they build their hopes. On the other are the means of repression of which the public power

disposes, and the methods it intends to employ. Everything is arranged by rule, and forms a marvellous whole, whence springs on the day it is wanted a light that pierces the very darkness of the conspiracy.

After this the importance attached to the possession of this immense box of secrets by the insurgents will be easily understood. It would prove the means to momentarily extinguish all resistance by depriving it of its direction, to know their enemies, to discover those who watched and betrayed them, to destroy the evidence of the guilt of those who dreaded such evidence.

The plan of the insurgents to surprise the Prefecture of Police was, therefore, so natural that it might have been foreseen without any special indication. The revelations of our agents only tended to confirm our suppositions in that respect. The plan of attack was absolutely settled ; provided, though, that the first results of the struggle rendered it practicable. We were, however, on our guard, and even then prepared to victoriously repulse all aggression, notwithstanding the inopportune retreat of some of our troops and our cannon.

We have already said that the movement was to be continued during this afternoon of the 3rd December by sham gatherings on the boulevards.

In fact, towards midday a strong crowd began to collect on the Place de la Bourse. Ex-representative Delbetz was at its head. He harangued the mob, communicated the decrees of the *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement, and proclaimed insurrection to be "the most sacred of duties." The police agents, in spite of their courageous efforts, became powerless to cope with the progress of this gathering. Each arrest was accompanied by a desperate struggle of the insurgents to rescue the prisoner. But, however threatening, this gathering was evidently nothing more than the diversion planned in the general attack. The mob was apparently unarmed; it kept to insult, shouting provocation and seditious ditties. A simple charge of cavalry would have got the better of it at the outset with far greater effect than the unequal struggle the police agents sustained for two mortal hours.

At last, at about half-past two, some cavalry appeared on the Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle, whither the gathering of the Place de la Bourse had removed; but the insurgents did not wait for the charge, they fled helter-skelter in all directions. The frock-coats migrated to other points of the boulevards not as yet occupied by the troops, in order to provoke fresh demonstrations; the smocks took the road to the neighbourhood of the Rue

St. Martin, where they would meet with the majority of their friends. A certain number of arrests were made, and we notably succeeded in laying hands upon ex-representative Delbetz.

At the self-same hour that the turntails of the Faubourg St. Antoine began their diversion on the Place de la Bourse, a manifestation of a graver nature took place in the neighbourhood of the Medical University. The men of the barricade of the Rue St. Marguerite were likewise its leaders. And there also the police found itself alone in the presence of the mob, and had to sustain the onslaught for more than two hours. Two agents were seriously wounded.

But the neighbourhoods of the Rues St. Denis, St. Martin, and du Temple had been selected for the pitched battle. A great number of barricades had been rapidly constructed. There were some in the Rues Rambuteau, St. Martin, Greneta, Baubourg, Transnonain, du Temple, and in a number of narrow streets adjacent. All those barricades, especially those of the Rues Transnonain and Rambuteau, were very solidly built up; several reached to the first stories, and were defended by individuals thoroughly well armed and possessing the sad experience of insurrectionary warfare.

Confronted by such preparations, the intervention of the police would have been without avail. Hence I had given orders to my agents to fall back upon the Hôtel de Ville, where they would find General Herbillon, who was preparing to attack the insurgents with an imposing force. My agents were charged with guiding the troops through the tortuous labyrinth in which they were about to engage; they were also charged with the arrests once the barricades taken, and with conveying the prisoners to the Prefecture.

At about two o'clock General Herbillon left the Hôtel de Ville at the head of a column composed of the 9th battalion of Foot Rifles and one piece of artillery. Whilst he moved upon the St. Denis and St. Martin quarters, a parallel movement by way of the Rue du Temple was executed by a battalion of the 6th Light Infantry. In less than an hour all the barricades were taken and their defenders put to flight. But the secret societies and certain workmen's associations had employed the whole of the morning in convoking the rioters. The place of meeting was the Place St. Martin. They were to bring their arms, the pass-word was to be given by the chiefs.

Towards four o'clock the gathering on this point became enormous, and groups of insurgents were

incessantly directed to the spots where the revolt proposed to renew the action.

At five o'clock those self-same quarters whence the insurrection had been swept were again and more strongly than before occupied by it. General Herbillon directed his attacking column a second time against them, and at about seven o'clock he was completely and everywhere master of the field. Apparent tranquillity reigned once more in this sorely-tried neighbourhood.

In this fresh attack Colonel Chapuis of the 3rd of the Line had had the heaviest task. He had dislodged the insurgents from the Rue Baubourg and adjacent streets. The firing had been very lively, and to show that the order of the Minister for War was not an empty threat, several insurgents, taken in a hand-to-hand struggle on the barricades themselves, were executed on the spot.

After this one might fancy the day's work virtually over, nevertheless my agents gave notice that the struggle would recommence in the evening.

In fact, at half-past eight the insurrection brought up fresh levies to the self-same ground where it had been defeated, and intrenched itself in a limited radius of which the Rue Aumaire was the centre, and whence it might operate by skilfully combined strategical points with the quarters of St. Martin,



St. Denis, and du Temple. This time, to my pressing appeal to support my unfortunate police agents, who bent beneath the weight of the insurrection, General Magnan opposed a refusal, having his reasons. There remained therefore nothing to aid them but a battalion of mobile gendarmerie, itself powerless to keep its ground against this fresh attempt. Nevertheless the Rue Aumaire had been valiantly attacked by a company of mobile gendarmerie; that the action had been a severe one might be gathered from the dead left on the spot.

The insurgents had indulged in the most revolting acts of barbarity. One of my agents being at midnight in this self-same Rue Aumaire, where the barricades had been rebuilt for the fourth time, witnessed a most revolting spectacle. A group of insurgents were busy placing on the summit of the barricade the severed head of an unfortunate mobile gendarme. A candle was placed in its mouth, and an inscription, which decency forbids us to reproduce, completed this melancholy proof of their ferocity.

From every point reoccupied by the revolt, municipal magistrates, notable inhabitants, commissaries, and superintendents came to reiterate their urgent demands for relief. I the more gladly became the interpreter of their requests with the military

authorities, seeing that these quarters were a prey to the most legitimate apprehensions. They were threatened with plunder and arson — fire being once kindled in those narrow streets, one could not without a shudder contemplate the proportions it might assume. The inhabitants clamoured for troops to remove the barricades and to occupy during the night the streets wrested from the revolt.

We must mention here, and we shall have to repeat the observation elsewhere, that already during the morning of the 3rd December the military authorities had displayed a lamentable parsimoniousness in the supply of troops. It was on their part neither negligence nor hesitation ; it was both the consequence of a system and the result of an imperfect appreciation of the situation. I had as it were to wrest from them one by one the regiments demanded by the commissaries in their conflicts with the crowds or with the revolt. Whole hours were lost in that way, and in such moments one hour well or badly employed determines final success or final defeat.

Why, in fact, warned as the military authorities had been since the previous evening of the intended gatherings on the Place de la Bastille and in the Faubourg St. Antoine, why did they send an insuffi-

cient number of troops, compelling General Marulaz to ask for reinforcements the moment he arrived ?

Why was not Mazas, the temporary place of confinement of the arrested generals, of part of the Mountain and of the leaders of the secret societies, guarded from without day and night in a manner such as to deprive the revolt of all temptation to provoke a riot there ?

Why were not the turbulent quarters, the classic soil of the barricade, strongly patrolled and kept in check by artillery ? Why were they not occupied by forces sufficiently numerous to immediately supply the civil authorities with such detachments as they might require ?

Why were the boulevards themselves, those easy promenade grounds for the army, and the neighbourhood of the Medical University, so absolutely deserted on that very morning, that our agents had been compelled to sustain an obstinate struggle by themselves, and only obtained the forces needed to disperse the gatherings with the utmost difficulty ?

Why did not the troops of General Herbillon, after their rapid successes, continue to occupy the neighbourhood of the Rues St. Denis, St. Martin, and du Temple, the hotbeds of the insurrection, as it were ? Why, in fact, were not the forces of General Herbillon, the moment they became insuf-

ficient to follow up their advantages, increased, doubled if necessary? What better opportunity could have offered itself to bring up our reserves?

Why had not the contingents been frequently renewed, as had been done on the morning of the 2nd December, in accordance with the previous arrangements? Finally, why did General Magnan obstinately refuse to comply with my urgent demands on this evening of the 3rd December? In his refusals, as in his decisions, the General acted upon a settled system. He had formal instructions. Those instructions had been agreed upon by the Ministers for War and of the Interior, and transmitted to him during the evening of the 3rd.

But my persistency sprang also from a system carefully weighed, though absolutely different from that of the military authorities. Hence between them and the Prefecture of Police there was a divergence of opinion about the best means to employ.

Assuredly we were animated by the same feelings, the desire to be successful, and the conviction that our respective preferences would conduce to that end. Generals de Saint-Arnaud and Magnan argued exclusively from a military point of view. I viewed matters more especially from a political one.

The military authorities judged that the ardour of the insurgents could only be finally extinguished by the infliction of a vigorous lesson. To chastise them with greater surety they preferred a combined action for which the revolt would have gathered all its forces, on which it would stake all its hopes; they wished to crush them with one blow. True, they had consented during the 3rd December to oppose the revolt at its outset, even to follow it in its various isolated engagements. It was a satisfaction difficult to refuse to the inhabitants of the invaded quarters. But this much conceded, once the vigour and morale of the army clearly demonstrated, the military authorities found themselves more unfettered to apply their own plan.

This plan I condemned, first for this reason: that by leaving the insurrection to develop itself we abandoned to its ravages such quarters as it pleased the rioters to occupy; secondly, because of the difficulty of foreseeing the proportions of an uprising in Paris and the extent of its consequences. To what degree would the population associate itself with the movement? What would be its moral effect upon the soldier? Those are problems the solution of which it will not do to take for granted too rashly. It must be ever highly impru-

dent to allow a revolt to gather strength and to expose one's self to serious risks when they may be prevented at their birth. I judged, and I had reason to feel very positive about the matter, that in presence of a permanent show of imposing forces the agitators would lose courage and fail to find fresh recruits. That their first attempts—if attempts there were—being paralyzed, confusion would, at all events, enter their camp, and would compel them to admit their impotency, and to relinquish a struggle of which they could see the disproportion and the perils.

I had had occasion in my various confidential discussions with General de Saint-Arnaud to notice the divergence of opinion that existed between us on the manner of action, and above all on the way in which the troops should be engaged in presence of a revolt or of a threatened insurrection in Paris.

In anticipation of the *Coup d'État* we were preparing together we had frequently conversed about the revolutions of 1830 and 1848. Both of us had studied their most instructive episodes with the idea of gaining some useful hints. Our appreciations were diametrically opposite, and the recollection of our conversations gave me the key to our present dissension.

The General attributed the overthrow of the monarchy in 1830, as in 1848, to the sole reason of the troops having been badly handled. According to his opinion, they had been too prematurely and, above all, too long brought into contact with the people; they had been harassed and fatigued with useless skirmishes, without coming hand-to-hand; weariness had been the principal cause of their defection.

In some respects this criticism was well founded, but it did not modify my opinion, which was this: that the troops had been inefficiently handled I admitted, but in this sense only, that their engagements came too late and were incomplete; that at the first gatherings the action should have been opened at once by cavalry charges, by more energetic means even, if necessary; that no crowds should have been allowed on any point of Paris without being swept away immediately. In this way sedition could not have come to a head, its very germ would have been crushed. The troops vigorously brought up from the beginning would have been neither harassed nor fatigued. The monarchies were defeated because they peaceably allowed the revolt to organize itself before they employed sufficient measures of repression, and when, astounded at its progress and extent, they

recognised the necessity for energetic action, it was too late.

"Too late!" Such was the fatal word that in itself summed up the whole criticism of this system of waiting and respite of the two dynasties overthrown by the mob.

To each of us those appreciations had become the rule of conduct, and the logical cause of our dissension.

The opinion of General de Saint-Arnaud, the assertion of the system of military authority, and the explanation of General Magnan's refusal of troops are, in fact, clearly indicated in the report the commander-in-chief of the army of Paris addressed to the Minister for War on the subject of the events of the 2nd December.\*

\* The document in question is not only the ordinary report which the commander-in-chief of an army addresses to the Minister for War on the morrow of an action which he has led. The Prince-President wished to have a detailed narrative of all that had happened during those December days from a civil as well as military point of view. He knew that the most slanderous reports had been sent from Paris to all the journals of Europe respecting the events that had occurred. He wished to establish the truth and show it openly. To this effect he had asked a circumstantial report from the commander-in-chief of the army of Paris, and requested me to forward a similar one of everything relating to the Prefecture of Police. Those two documents were to be, and in fact were, sent through the intermediary of the Minister for Foreign Affairs to all our embassies. Our ambassadors were thus enabled to deny the mendacious assertions by the aid of which it was sought to pervert public opinion. The report of General Magnan is dated the



Speaking of the incidents of the 3rd December, General Magnan expresses himself to this effect:—

“Suspecting that it was the intention of the leaders of the insurrection to tire out the troops by successively carrying the riot into every quarter, I decided to leave them for a little while to themselves, to give them the chance of choosing their own ground, to take up their positions, and to form a serried mass which I might get at and offer battle to. To this effect I withdrew all the small outposts, sent all the troops to their barracks, and waited.”

Two further documents, but unpublished until now, demonstrate more clearly still the method applied by the military authorities. To my urgent solicitations to leave on foot, during the night of the 3rd-4th December, sufficient forces to prevent the rebuilding of the barricades, General Magnan replied as follows:—

“PARIS, 3rd December, 1851.

“MONSIEUR LE PRÉFET DE POLICE,

“I beg to inform you that all the troops of the

9th December, 1851. It figures *in extenso* in the *Moniteur Universel*. Later on we will speak of the report of the Prefect of Police addressed to the Chief of the State.

army of Paris will take up their positions of attack to-morrow, 4th December, at 10 A.M.

“Pray accept, M. le Préfet de Police, the assurance of my profound esteem.

“The General Commander-in-Chief.

“MAGNAN.”

“Note (Holographic).

“I have ordered all the small posts to be abandoned. All my troops go back to their quarters to-night to get rest. I leave Paris to the insurgents; I leave them to construct their barricades. To-morrow, when they are behind them, I will read them a lesson. We must have done with this and restore tranquillity to the capital. To-morrow all the gatherings will be dispersed by force, the barricades knocked down by the artillery . . . .

“MAGNAN.”

Categorical as were the terms of the commander-in-chief's letter, I was bound to remember my mission—to insure by all possible means the safety of the city of Paris. Swayed by this duty, I felt myself bound to still ask General Magnan to reconsider his decision. I wrote to him once more in the most pressing terms; I asked him to leave me at least some pickets to protect those luckless inhabitants of the St. Denis and St. Martin

quarters, and to secure them against plunder and arson. I sent him at the same time copies of their urgent requests and of the reports of my commissaries. But, as we have already pointed out, the General was not free to do as he liked ; he had his instructions. His fresh reply only confirmed, and in almost identical terms, his first communication. It reads as follows :—

“PARIS, 3<sup>rd</sup> December.

“MONSIEUR LE PRÉFET,

“I have just received your letter ; it in no way changes my determination. The troops will take up their positions at ten o'clock, not a minute before. I wish to give my soldiers rest, and above all to give the insurrection time to develop itself, if it dare do so. It is the only way to have done with it once for all.

“I wish to be able to crush it and make an end of all those insurrectionary movements ; at the same time to restore confidence to the capital.

“Pray accept, &c. . . .

“The General-in-Chief,

“MAGNAN.”

We shall soon see that the next morning, the 4th December, at ten o'clock, the hour at which I had been officially and twice informed that all the

troops of the army of Paris would take up their positions of attack, the troops were still kept back in their barracks. We shall see that they continued to remain there for several hours, and that it wanted renewed and most urgent solicitations on my part to bring them out.

It may be asked why, in so grave an emergency, my demands for troops went no farther than the general-in-chief of the army of Paris—why I did not carry the question somewhat higher—why I did not apply directly to the Minister for War, or even to the Chief of the State himself? I can only reply, that on the 2nd December and on the occasion of the delay in the sending of troops to the *mairie* of the 10th arrondissement, it had been agreed between General de Saint-Arnaud and me that all my requisitions and demands for troops should be addressed to General Magnan, who would according to circumstances refer to the Minister or not. Hence I only conformed to what had been agreed upon. I should add that, apart from this, most of my messages, but especially the most important, were dispatched in four copies—one to the Prince, the three others to the Ministers for War and of the Interior and to the commander-in-chief of the army of Paris respectively. The Government was therefore informed of the

conflict going on ; it had all the documents of the discussion before it.

The two letters from General Magnan summed up the military system which I condemned, and against which I did not cease to struggle. Which of us was right ? I was convinced that the events of the 3rd December might have been prevented, and that as a matter of course the 4th December would have been averted.

Hence it will be perceived that, while pursuing an identical aim, we totally differed on the most efficient methods of attaining it. I still maintain that if my advice had been followed at the right time we should have added to our triumph the consoling satisfaction of having accomplished our task without bloodshed.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### PREPARING FOR THE INSURRECTION.

The Insurgents' Hopes —False Rumours and Revolutionary Placards.

—Orders with regard to the Gatherings.—Voting by Registration

—The Objection it meets with.—M. de Morny's Inquiries —His

Instructions.—An Exchange of useless Dispatches.—Domiciliary

Calls for Arms, and Pillage of the Houses close to the Barricades.

THE events of the 2nd December had produced such consternation in the revolutionary camp that the night was barely sufficient to revive the drooping courage and to reconstruct a nucleus of active elements for an insurrection. The dominant fact of this 2nd December had been the resistance of the parliamentarians. We have seen that on the following day, the 3rd December, the instigations of the previous day had borne fruit. It was no longer with the hope of immediate success that the struggle had been engaged in. Its first aim was to animate and to impel the undecided by example. Little by little a far different hope gladdened the vision. A recurrence of the treacheries of 1830 and 1848 was hoped for. From the fact that in certain regiments several officers had remained devoted to

the arrested generals, the deceptive consequence was drawn that a few battalions would secede, and that gradually the rest of the army would follow this example. This illusion was held out everywhere as a certainty, and at the same time false rumours of the most improbable nature were spread in a way so simultaneous as to be truly marvellous. Above all, those relating to the attitude of the provinces had succeeded in working up the imagination. The speeches of such leaders of the Mountain as still remained at large, their proclamations, their appeals to arms, their convocation of the hindmost vassals of the secret societies, had also borne fruit, and on the 4th December the insurrection fancied itself in a position to offer battle. Their dreams already showed them laurels of the third day, as in 1830 and 1848.

We will not accompany those prudent firebrands and patrons of the revolt through their nocturnal meetings, though we had among them invisible watchers. The reproduction of their speeches would prove without interest. They were only the eternal repetitions of the street mob orators. It will be sufficient to mention the leading summaries. The placards that gave them covered the walls of Paris at dawn.

The great citizen, Victor Hugo, was to the rioters

The writer elect; and it is no doubt to more surely secure to them the advantage of his literary skill in the drawing up of their pompous proclamations, to avoid aught that might divert his inspiration, that he kept with such great precaution as far as possible from the post of danger. While calling the workmen to arms he was particularly careful not to change his pen for a rifle. The following proclamation is attributed to the great poet:—

“Vive la République !

“Vive la Constitution !

“Vive le suffrage universel !

“Louis Napoleon is a traitor !

“He has violated the Constitution !

“He has placed himself beyond the pale of the law !

“The republican representatives recall to the minds of the people and the army Article 68 and Article 110, conceived as follows :—

“The Constituent Assembly intrusts the defence of the present Constitution and the rights it consecrates to the custody and patriotism of all Frenchmen.

“Henceforth the people are for ever in possession of universal suffrage, they have need of no prince whatever to give it back to them, and will chastise



the rebel. Let the people do their duty. The representatives will march at their head.

“Michel de Bourges, Schœlcher, General Laydet, Mathieu de la Drôme, Brives, Brémont, Joigneaux, Chauffour, Cassal, Guillaud, Jules Favre, Victor Hugo, Emmanuel Arago, Madier de Montjau the elder, Mathé, Signart, Rongeat de l'Isère, Viguiier, Eugène Sue, Esquiros, Deflotte.

“Esquiros died on the barricade of the Faubourg St. Antoine.”

Esquiros had no more died on the barricade than General Cavaignac had been murdered in prison. Still the latter tidings was in hot haste announced by an ardent republican, a quasi-ocular witness of the assassination. The same sincerity characterizes all their information.

After this statement came the following, equally remarkable for its ultra-revolutionary eloquence—

“PEOPLE!

“The nephew of the murderer of the First Republic, the man whom in your sincerity you have invested with the supreme magistracy, has committed the crime of high treason.

“People of February who would no longer have a master, it remains with you to inflict upon the new dictator the punishment he deserves.

“By virtue of a decree of the National Assembly Louis Napoleon is outlawed.

“The representatives are tracked, imprisoned, butchered ; and savage hirelings, paid with the Cossack’s gold, stand ready to pour shot and shell among the children of Paris.\*

“To arms, to the barricades!!! The committees of *The Proscribed* and of *Central Resistance* are at their posts, awaiting the help of their brethren.

“To arms!!! to arms!!! to arms!!! Death to the enemies of the Republic.

“For the central committee of Resistance, for the society of the Proscribed.

“L. M. GUÉRIN, J. CLÉDAT.”

Furthermore might be read the sensation paragraph which its authors knew full well to be absolutely false :—

“INHABITANTS OF PARIS!

“The National Guards and the people of the departments are marching on Paris to help you to seize the traitor Louis Napoleon Bonaparte.

“For the representatives of the people,

“VICTOR HUGO, President.

“SCHÆLCHER, Secretary.”

\* “L’enfant de Paris” does not mean a juvenile only, it is sometimes the highflown, more often the familiar, term for the French cockney.—*Trans.*

Nor was variety wanting; the following oratorical masterpiece was both placarded and distributed by hand.

“TO THE PEOPLE.

“The Constitution is confided to the custody and patriotism of the French citizens.

“Louis Napoleon is placed beyond the pale of the law

“The state of siege is abolished.

“Universal suffrage is reinstated.

“Vive la République! To arms!

“For the collective Members of the Mountain,  
“The Delegate, VICTOR HUGO.”

Of course the army could not be overlooked in these eloquent appeals to revolt. The following proclamation was addressed to it:—

“TO THE ARMY.

“Soldiers! what are you about to do? You are being misled and deceived.

“Your most illustrious chiefs are in chains, the sovereignty of the nation is shattered to atoms; its embodiment outraged and violated. And will you follow into the path of opprobrium and treason men lost to all honour—a Louis Napoleon, who sullies his great name by the most odious of crimes, a

Saint-Arnaud, cheat, forger, six times dismissed from the army for his vices and his scoundrelism : Soldiers, will you turn against the fatherland the arms she has confided to you for her defence : Soldiers, disobedience to-day is the most sacred of duties. Soldiers, unite with the people to save the fatherland and the Republic.

“Down with the usurper.

“Your magistrates, your representatives, your fellow-citizens, your brothers, your mothers, and your sisters will ask you an account of the blood that has been shed.”

Finally the workmen were appealed to, as if the latter, who live by their day's labour, had to gain aught else from this demagogical saturnalia than the doubtful honour of providing, at the peril of their lives, the stepping stone for the few ambitious men who united them for their own purpose.

To these workmen, whom they did their utmost to deceive, they said :—

“TO THE WORKMEN.

“Citizens and companions !

“The solemn compact is broken. A royalist minority, in concert with Louis Napoleon, violated the Constitution on the 31st May, 1850.

“In spite of the enormity of the outrage, we

awaited to obtain its signal reparation, the general election of 1852.

“But yesterday, he who was the President of the Republic has wiped out this solemn date.

“Under the pretext of restoring to the people that which no one can wrest from her, he really aims at placing her under a military dictatorship.

“Citizens and companions !

“Louis Napoleon has placed himself beyond the pale of the law. The majority of the Assembly, this majority who laid hands on universal suffrage, is dissolved.

“Only the minority preserves its legitimate authority. Let us rally round this minority. Let us fly to the deliverance of the republican prisoners ; let us gather to our midst the representatives faithful to universal suffrage, let us make them a rampart of our bodies, let our delegates increase their ranks, and form with them the nucleus of the new National Assembly.

“Then, reunited in the name of the Constitution, inspired by our fundamental dogma, Liberty, Fraternity, Equality, with the popular standard waving over us, we shall easily overcome this new Cæsar and his prætorians.

“CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF CORPORATIONS.

“P.S.—The city of Rheims is in the hands of the people; its delegates to the new National Assembly are starting for Paris surrounded by a patriotic phalanx.

“The proscribed republicans are re-entering our walls to support the popular effort.”

The city of Rheims was not in the hands of the people; but one lie more or less did not matter much.

Let us terminate those sorry productions with a sample of poetry that stared at one from every wall.

“CITIZENS, KEEP COURAGE.”

“Un peuple ne peut pas sans être en décadence,  
Perdre ses libertés et son indépendance.  
Avec des soldats ivres et des proscriptions,  
On a pu quelquefois effrayer des nations.  
Jamais la tyrannie et d'indignes entraves  
Ne parviendront chez nous à faire des esclaves.”

(A people cannot, without being in decadence, lose liberty and independence. With drunken soldiers and proscription nations have sometimes been frightened. But tyranny and ignominious fetters will never succeed in making slaves of us.)

It would require a volume to reproduce all the attempts at eloquence produced by these delirious imaginations, without counting the lies and impostures.

Side by side with those appeals to revolt was the

“order” I had had posted up between four and six in the morning; it was a last warning to those misguided people, and at any rate a necessary hint to the indifferent not to increase, at the peril of their lives, the mobs by their presence.

This order read as follows :—

“INHABITANTS OF PARIS!

“Like ourselves, you wish for order and tranquillity, like ourselves you are impatient to have done with this handful of the factions who since yesterday lift the standard of revolt on high.

“Our brave and fearless troops have overthrown and defeated them everywhere.

“The people has remained deaf to their provocations.

“Nevertheless there are some measures which public security compels.

“The state of siege is already decreed.

“The moment has come to apply its rigorous consequences.

“In virtue of the powers it confers upon us,

“We, Prefect of Police,

“Order :

“(Art. 1.) The traffic is suspended for every public and private conveyance. There will be no exception save in favour of those that relate to the

food supply of Paris and the transport of material of war.

"All obstructions of pedestrians in the public thoroughfares and the formation of groups will be dispersed by force, *without preliminary summons*.

"Let the peaceful citizens remain at home. There is a serious peril in not complying with the above-named orders.

"Given in Paris, the 4th December, 1851.

"The Prefect of Police,

"DE MAUPAS."

In the early part of the morning the police, wherever it was sufficiently numerous, was mainly occupied with tearing down the seditious placards; but on some points the bills were protected by armed groups, and we had to await the arrival of the troops in order to act. In the quarters where the masses were congregating the placards were read aloud, and each phrase was emphasized by the most significant plaudits.

No means of inciting the mob were neglected. The tide of resistance was visibly rising; it rose the more uninterruptedly from the fact of the military authorities having decided "to abandon Paris until ten o'clock to the insurgents;" the latter could get ready, count their numbers, organize



themselves, and select their positions at their ease. The action of the police itself lost its ordinary efficiency.

Having been unable to modify the resolutions of the military authorities, I was necessarily compelled to shape my conduct on theirs. I say necessarily, insisting upon the significance of the term. In fact, under ordinary circumstances, when a marked dissension on grave questions arises among the members of a government, an understanding often becomes only possible on the condition of one or the other party retiring. The minority withdraws and unity of views is restored by the joining of new colleagues sharing the sentiment of the majority. If this doctrine be the law of parliamentary governments, it should according to logic be applied to those powers which rest within the hands of a limited number, unless circumstances absolutely exceptional create situations to which every will must bend. The critical nature of the events inaugurated on this 3rd December was to an eminent degree one of those cases that impose silence upon the most legitimate susceptibilities. Ought I in the dissension between me and the military authorities to have put an end to the conflict by my resignation? I ought not, and honestly I could not. For more

than a month I had accumulated all the elements of this great enterprise, and for prudence' sake trusted to memory only for the greater part of the information necessary to the direction of all things. What could, in taking my place, a successor have done, ignorant as he must have been of the machinations of our enemies, of their secret designs? In such moments the transmission of the functions of a Prefect of Police must be considered as an impossibility; in case of supreme need it could only have been effected at the risk of the gravest prejudice to the Government. I was thoroughly convinced of this. I did not for a moment think of retiring; on the contrary, I deemed it my duty to associate myself with the responsibility forced upon me. Besides, I was supported in the comparative sacrifice of my opinion by this consideration, that if my system was greatly preferable to that of the military authorities, the latter by different means would equally lead to success. I also preserved the hope that by my warnings and persistency I should succeed in enlightening such members of the Government as sinned by their excess of quietude, and in converting them to more efficient measures. My intervention under such conditions could only produce a beneficial counter-action.

Granted, as I have already said, that, the troops retiring until ten o'clock in the morning and my agents left to themselves, the latter could not oppose a front to the uprising that invaded the centre of Paris, would it not have been madness to require of them the attack of barricades so solidly built that artillery only could get the better of them? Would it not have been inhuman to ask of those brave servitors the sacrifice of their lives to no purpose? Such an effort would have only resulted in giving our enemies the dangerous encouragement of a first success.

My orders were: to proceed to the points where a gathering is reported, to disperse it if possible; to arrest the leaders if there be a chance of keeping them in custody. In case of insufficient forces wherewith to face such gatherings as are too numerous and provided with arms, to retreat without giving battle, and to simultaneously inform the commander-in-chief of the army of Paris and the Prefect of Police of the points occupied by the revolt. To tear down the seditious placards and to arrest the street orators.

But the zeal of our agents was such that on several points, unable to resign themselves to retreat, they had boldly engaged the struggle. It was in consequence of this that from the Porte

St. Denis, commissary of police Bellanger sent me the subjoined report:—

“PORTE ST. DENIS, 4<sup>th</sup> December, 10 50 A.M

“I have just been personally assaulted in trying to disperse a gathering; I want a reinforcement of forty agents. My scarf was torn to pieces, but I am not wounded.

“BELLANGER.”

I received more than fifty reports of a similar nature; but police agents could do no good—troops were wanted; meanwhile the leaders of insurrection had it all their own way.

Among the methods of agitation resorted to by the street orators, the one by which they endeavoured to reap the greatest benefit to their cause was, a critical consideration of the decree of the 2nd December relative to the voting to be adopted with regard to the plébiscite. In fact the decree introduced a considerable modification to the customs of the country. The secret vote by means of the individual voting paper had solely obtained for these many years, under the Republic of 1848, under the government of July, and under the Restoration. It was a tradition with the living generations, and to find the precedents of voting on the register which the Minister of

the Interior wished to revive, one had to go back to the beginning of the century.

The new method was this. In every *mairie*, in every regiment for the army, two registers were to be provided, one for the acceptance, one for the non-acceptance of the plébiscite. Those registers were to remain open for eight days, and the electors were called to record, or to have it done for them, in the event of their inability to write, their vote, accompanied by their names and christian names.

In proposing this M. de Morny had been fatally inspired. The feeling of the country was sufficiently safe to trust to the verdict she would give if left altogether independent. This pression, clumsily transparent, gratuitously hurt public feeling, and even the most moderate of people loudly protested against this exaction of the Government. In the army dissatisfaction prevailed; officers and soldiers alike expressed openly their hurt at the kind of inquisition it was proposed to exercise over their suffrages.

This inopportune decree created a difficulty which assumed very serious proportions. From all parts of Paris the commissaries and agents of the different services informed me of the disastrous effect of the measure. I in my turn made myself the

echo of those complaints with the Government by asking for the instant repeal of the decree, and for the return to the secret mode of voting by the individual voting paper. I considered it urgent and necessary. The organizers of mobs and riots had, we repeat, a precious theme for their declamations. By working it well they succeeded in creating a strong current of excitement and in increasing the number of their adherents.

But in addition to this piece of good luck which the agitators had received from the Government itself to serve as a text for their recriminations, how many other means less avowable did they not employ to mislead public opinion? The principal features, however, in those discourses in the open streets were the false rumours to which we alluded above, and which were invented to excite the lukewarm and to give confidence to the timid.

What did not those orators say? A panting individual elbowed his way through the crowd; he came from Rouen, he said, and had seen the garri-son fraternise with the people, and get ready to move on Paris in order to back the insurrection. Lyons and Marseilles, shouted another, are in the hands of the insurrection, and the troops there have proclaimed the deposition of Louis Napoleon. Generals Bedeau, Lamoricière, and

Changarnier, said a third, have been set at liberty by some of the insurgents; they are already in the Faubourg St Antoine, and are being enthusiastically acclaimed by the few isolated posts at which they have presented themselves. They are going to meet the troops; the magical effect of their presence will impel the rest of the army. General Neumayer, it was added, is marching on Paris at the head of twenty thousand men. And the cries, the huzzas, the frenzied shouts with which those cock-and-bull stories were received!

At places where the frock-coats predominated, some words of encouragement were added to these happy tidings, addressed either to the Orleanists or the Legitimists, for the two parties counted some of their forlorn hope among this multitude.

The Orleanists were told that their princes had just landed at Cherbourg, and that the troops had immediately placed themselves under their command.

The Legitimists were treated to a more fascinating tale still. M. de Chambord, they were assured, was at the gates of Paris, he would make his entry within a few hours. To frustrate all attempt at espionage he had donned the uniform of a simple private in the 12th Dragoons.

We may be permitted to show by the way the kind of witticisms with which the tedious hours were beguiled at the Ministry of the Interior. The Minister had under his direct orders only a small number of agents, and even they were not very experienced, and disposed of no efficient means of information. Hence he was only informed about events and the rumours that were current by what the Prefecture of Police told him. I very carefully sent him the substance of all the important news, but this summary information was apparently not sufficient. Nevertheless I could not, in order to reply to his continual inquiries, sacrifice the time taken up by more urgent necessities, and above all by the incessant instructions to my agents, who succeeded each other in my room. Hours would have been wanted to reply to the questions of the Minister and his subordinates, who often allowed themselves to send me messages in his name without his authority. From time to time I hinted by my replies my wish to be delivered from the too frequent questions and useless recommendations. Once I did so in a manner which appeared to please the Minister of the Interior but very moderately. I judged so from the fact that he gave publicity to one of those messages, endeavouring to invest it with the appearance of a serious com-



munication, when it was more than plainly visible that it had no other aim than to emphasize my weariness of his too multitudinous questions.

The reader will be able to judge from this message, to which we must add the summary of those that preceded it; they as it were supply the explanatory frame, which has been carefully omitted.

On the 4th December between eight and ten in the morning, I received from the Minister of the Interior nine dispatches containing variations of the following texts. "Have you any news?" "What's up?" "Please let me know."

To these messages I replied alternately with one of the following phrases: "Situation unchanged." "Nothing new." "I am watching." In fact there was no appreciable change in the situation. I had summed up all its aspects in a condensed report addressed at six in the morning of this same 4th December to the Elysée, the Ministers for War and the Interior, and General Magnan respectively. Seeing that a fair field and much favour was given to the insurrection, things took their natural course, and the whole of the telegraphic implements at our disposal would not have sufficed to narrate to the Minister the thousand and one episodes that succeeded each other rapidly; besides, they only

offered a secondary interest, and could in no way determine the resolutions to be taken.

At a quarter-past ten I received the following message:—

“Minister of the Interior to Prefect of Police.

“The Minister complains that his questions are being left unanswered; the replies should be given exactly. Is there anything new?”

It is to this tenth message, *not signed*, that, losing all patience, I replied by the dispatch alluded to above, which reproduced one of the false rumours bruited about on the boulevards. Subjoined is the text: “It is rumoured that the 12th Dragoons, which will arrive to-night from St Germain, counts in its ranks the Count de Chambord. *I scarcely believe in it.*” “*And I do not believe in it at all,*” said more or less wittily, in a dispatch *not signed*, the Minister or one of his subordinates. Is it necessary to say to one who understands the value of words that the “I scarcely believe in it” of my message meant absolutely “I do not believe in it at all”? I might assuredly have pointed it out to the Minister, but it was hardly the moment for any but serious talk, and I confined myself to profit by the incident in my own way. I was for some

hours delivered from the idle questions of the Ministry of the Interior.

The Minister, if he was the author of this last message, was wrong in trying to joke with regard to this false rumour. One of his most constant preoccupations, in fact, was to gainsay the false rumours, even the most improbable, and he never left off asking me to report to him *all the false rumours* that came to my knowledge. The one relating to the Count de Chambord was of a piece with those concerning the arrival of General Neumayer at the head of a mutinous army, the assassination of General Bedeau, and many others on the subject of which I had previously written to him, pointing out the improbability of those inventions, as I had done on the occasion of the dispatch with reference to M. de Chambord. To get an idea of the persistency with which M. de Morny strove to deny the rumours, even the most frivolous, one must refer to the journals of the time inspired by the Minister of the Interior, notably to the *Constitutionnel* of the 4th December.

Added to these reiterated questions was a series of instructions, often missing their mark, relating to incidents already done with. Then came a batch of news, either unexact or a day or so old. This desire to meddle at any cost with the details of an

administration of which he had not the faintest knowledge led the Minister of the Interior to inopportune interference with a service that could only gain by being left alone. We will only quote some samples, and give the telegraphic dispatches without any comment.

“Minister of the Interior to Prefect of Police.

*“3rd December, 4 P.M.*

“I am being told that the funeral of Baudin will be made the occasion of a manifestation from the 3rd legion (National Guard.) The service will take place at the church Bonne-Nouvelle.

“DE MORNY.”

“Prefect of Police to Minister of the Interior.

*“3rd December, 4.15 P.M.*

“Baudin was buried ever so long ago. We took every precaution to prevent any disturbance. Only a hundred and ten persons were present at the funeral.

“DE MAUPAS.”

With reference to some bodies of which the insurgents got possession I received the following dispatch:—

“Minister of the Interior to Prefect of Police.

“*4th December.*

“Remove the bodies which at the present moment are lying in the Cité Bergère.

“DE MORNY.”

“Prefect of Police to Minister of the Interior.

“*4th December.*

“I am afraid the information brought to you is not absolutely exact; the bodies have been removed ever so long ago by my orders.

“DE MAUPAS.”

These dispatches seem not to have been confided by M. de Morny to his historiographers, or at any rate they did not think it convenient to publish them; they would, however, have had the advantage over theirs of being exact and authentic.

It should be said that if among the numerous false rumours thrown as a sop to the credulity of the seditious part of the population there were not many that succeeded in imposing upon them, there were some that were taken for granted. The defection of the army, the relief on its way from the provinces, the support of the National Guard, were hopes fondly indulged.

And, in fact, the attitude of the National Guard on many points was of a nature calculated to encourage those illusions. Several of its officers openly declared in favour of resistance, and used their authority to entice their men. It is true only a small number responded to the appeal, but their presence induced patience; and the intervention of this citizen militia to whom belonged the honour of the overthrow of the two monarchies of 1830 and 1848 was expected at every moment.

To accelerate the taking to arms of the citizen soldier domiciliary visits were at last resorted to, and in those quarters invaded by the revolt this much was obtained at any rate—those who declined going down into the streets themselves gave up their arms. Many of the National Guards did not even wait to be asked; they themselves took them to the insurgents or had them taken by their wives and children. As in times gone by, and to preserve healthy traditions as it were, they wrote in large characters on their doors “*Arms given up;*” in this way the dwelling was somewhat more safe from pillage than that of the neighbour.

This domiciliary investigation had not been without results, and during this morning of the 4th December the insurgents succeeded in considerably increasing the stock of arms of which

they already disposed. In this way each one contributed his stone to the edifice, some by collecting arms, others by working zealously at the barricades. The latter especially had shown an ardour and aptitude worthy of a better cause. In less than two hours a whole quarter was bristling with entrenchments combined with real science. In the principal streets, where the first shock from the troops was expected, the barricades were formidable, and reached as high as the second floors. Their thickness was such as to afford a shelter, for some time at least, from artillery fire, and to require only a few men to effectually check whole regiments. The most important were those on the Boulevards St. Denis and St. Martin, in the Rues du Petit-Carreau, Montorgueil, and Rambuteau. Especially at the corner of the latter street had the defences of the insurrection been constructed with a science wholly military. Four thick barricades were dovetailed as it were and formed a large quadrangle, the houses that commanded them were filled with insurgents, and the windows, carefully loopholed and padded, allowed of firing upon the assailants without much danger. Similar arrangements obtained at the Rue du Petit-Carreau, which counted no less than six barricades. Then after those

principal works came those of second order, occupying the streets adjacent to the great arteries; there were some in the Rues Tiquetonne and des Jeûneurs and in the streets opening into the Rue Montmartre; above all in the centre of the St. Denis and St. Martin quarters, in the Rues Transnonain, Beaubourg, Volta, Aumaire, Greneta, des Gravilliers, at the Cloister St. Merry, in the Rue du Temple, and throughout the whole of the maze that links the latter street to those of St. Martin and St. Denis.

Other positions outside the central quarter had also been fortified by the insurrection. According to the opinion of experts no revolt had ever been so solidly and scientifically prepared. We should recollect, however, that never before had the system of waiting and observation adopted by the military authorities been indulged to such an extent.

For full fifteen hours the public thoroughfares had been left without troops. Even the posts occupied in ordinary times had been abandoned. Assuredly the margin allowed to the revolt was large, and it had amply profited by it. We have already said that for want of armed support our agents had been condemned to comparative inaction. They could only be an embarrassment to



the insurgents, they were powerless to become an obstacle.

It is not without impunity that one allows such bandits to breathe freely for a moment. Such moments are to honest people full of anxiety and tribulation. In the streets occupied by the revolutionary dregs every excess had been committed—houses plundered, furniture thrown out of the windows to make barricades with, and peaceable folk maltreated. One of the principal inhabitants of the quarter, who had resisted the spoliation of his dwelling, was bound alive to the wheel of an omnibus on the top of a barricade which was expected to stand the brunt of the soldiers' fire. For the whole of this invaded quarter those hours had been hours of mourning and terror.

I repeat once more, I wished to avoid this at any cost. Could it have been avoided? The point might have been contested on the 3rd in the evening; it would have with more appearance of reason have been denied on the morning of the 4th when the revolt was at its apogee; but I maintain, nevertheless, that with energetic measures in the early morning of the 3rd we might have, if not prevented, at least reduced to the smallest and most futile attempts, this insurrection which was about to take such formidable proportions.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE FOURTH DECEMBER.

Delays.—Telegraphic Dispatches from the Prefect of Police.—The Army of Paris leaves its Barracks.—The Convergent Movements of the Divisions Carrelet and Levasseur.—March of General de Courtygis.—Tactics of the Insurgents on the Left Bank.—Retreat of the Troops from the Cité—Attack on the Prefecture of Police.—An Incident of the Struggle.—More Dispatches of the Prefect of Police.—The imaginary Dispatches of MM Victor Hugo and Véron.—The Troops go back to Barracks.—The new Barricades.—The Conferences of the Night and their Pass-word.—Colonel Fleury's Counsel.—General Rollin's Mission.—Appeasement and Countermand.

WE have arrived at last at the hour when the errors committed by the military authorities were to be valiantly retrieved. Chiefs and soldiers would vie with each other in courage and devotion. The army of order was about to crush the hordes of anarchy.

Still we cannot refrain from showing once more the exceeding difficulty with which the civil authority obtained the putting in motion of the troops. In accordance with the two letters from General Magnan to the Prefect of Police—letters we quoted in one of the foregoing chapters—the

troops would be out and occupy their positions of attack at ten o'clock in the morning.

At ten o'clock not a regiment, not a soldier, had appeared.

At eleven o'clock, at twelve, not a shadow of a troop.

At half-past twelve I sent the following dispatch :

"Prefect of Police to President of the Republic, Minister for War, Minister of the Interior, and General Magnan.

" 4th December, 12.30 P.M.

"The barricades increase visibly, the insurrection has not made such a show of strength as yet as it does at this moment. The insurgents are masters of the Porte St. Denis, the Rue Greneta, the Square of St. Martin, and the adjacent points. A barricade on the boulevards reaches to the second stories. The hour for repression has struck. There are no troops, or what there is is insufficient.

"I am almost certain that a plan of attack on the Prefecture of Police will be attempted to night. The efforts of the insurrection will tend in that direction. *We are ready, resolved, and firm.\**

\* In his "Histoire d'un Crime," M. Victor Hugo reveals to us the store set by the insurgents on this attack of the Prefecture of Police.

"The barricades are gaining ground, they have almost reached the Montorgueil.

"DE MAUPAS."

It was only at half-past one that the army of Paris left its barracks, and at two that it began the attack. But if the period of waiting had been long, the deployment of this valiant body afforded an admirable spectacle. Its bearing, discipline, and steadiness were excellent. Firm generals to command, stout officers to take it into battle. And we cannot help insisting—for our dissensions altered neither our affection nor our esteem—upon the value of the two chiefs this army boasted in Generals de Saint-Arnaud and Magnan. Their courage and military skill were known to every soldier. Every one knew that they would not retreat an inch, that there would be no compromise; no one feared, as in 1830 and 1848, to be discountenanced in his effort, to be abandoned in the struggle, to be given up to the outrage of those he had come to combat. The army went into the fire with confidence. Scarcely was the head of the

With reference to a pretended decree of the permanent committee of the revolt he expresses himself thus: "Representative Duputz received a few hours later from our hands a copy of the decree, with instructions to take it himself to the Conciergerie the moment the attempt we meditated on the Prefecture of Police and the Hôtel de Ville had succeeded. Unfortunately the attempt miscarried."

column in view of the barricade which occupied the whole width of the boulevard between the Gymnase and the Porte St. Denis than a terrific fire was opened on the troops, and especially on General Carrelet himself, who led in person. His orderly fell by his side, and two men close to him were mortally wounded. But the brave leader stood the fire of the insurgents without flinching, and continued to encourage his men by word and gesture. After a well-sustained musketry fire our soldiers swung into the "double-quick," and tried to take the barricade at the point of the bayonet, but the work was found too hot, and the artillery had to be got into position.

It was only after being battered for a long while that the infantry renewed its onslaught on this first barricade. They managed to take it, and the insurgents fell back in good order behind the other barricades of the Boulevards St. Denis and St. Martin and behind that of the Rue St. Denis itself, all three of which had been constructed as a shelter and as a second line of defence.

This barricade of the Rue St. Denis was still more solidly constructed than the one on the boulevard that had been taken. After the first exchange of several volleys it was seen that an attempt to storm it would not only be murderous

work, but would lead to nothing ; once more the artillery was brought up, and a fire from four pieces did some heavy damage. The defence was exceedingly tenacious, but at a given moment the infantry was brought up, and the 72nd of the Line sent against it.

Colonel Quilico would allow none of his officers the privilege of leading. He put himself at the head of his column of attack. At the first volley and at the foot of the barricade itself he fell seriously wounded at the very moment when about to scale it. His lieutenant-colonel made a desperate rush with his men to avenge his chief. He also was struck down ; he fell dead by the side of the valiant General de Cotte, just as the latter had his horse killed under him. Such examples from the chiefs could not fail to inspire the men. Amid a very hailstorm of shot the 72nd threw itself against the barricade and succeeded at last in dislodging the insurgents, who fell back once more on their fortified positions a little lower down the same Rue St. Denis and the adjacent thoroughfares.

Meanwhile General Canrobert at the head of his brigade attacked the barricades in the neighbourhood of the Rue St. Martin ; he met with the same obstinate resistance from the insurgents, but he also found the same impulse amongst his men, to

whom, as usual, he gave the noblest example. All the obstacles there were carried by the bayonet.

General Bourgon also had had some tough engagements, first of all to get into the Rue du Temple, afterwards in the street itself, the line of which he was to follow until he fell across the Rue Rambuteau.

The movement of the Carrelet division was supported by a strong cavalry column under General Reybell; it was flanked by several batteries of artillery and kept straight down the boulevards, charging the crowds as it went.

On the Boulevard Montmartre, just against the warehouses of M. Sallandrouze and those of the *Prophète*, some shots had been fired from one or more windows on the troops; the latter fired in their turn, and a regularly sustained musketry fire was the result. It would have been dangerous not to punish severely an aggressive movement that would not have failed to find imitators. The military authorities understood this, and two pieces of artillery opened fire on the house whence the discharge came. Some of the insurgents were killed, and the firing from the windows was put a stop to.

This incident provoked a great deal of noise. Nothing, however, could have been more natural.

The troops finding themselves attacked retaliated with the means of defence at hand, and instead of allowing the struggle to be protracted, which would have increased the number of victims on both sides, they made short work of the attack. They not only acted wisely, but in accordance with the most elementary rules of warfare.\*

General Magnan's plan was to execute a converging movement by means of the Carrelet and Levasseur divisions, and thus to enclose the revolt within an iron circle. It was to obtain this result that at the moment when Generals de Cotte, Canrobert, and Bourgon, of the Carrelet division operated along the boulevards, Generals Dulac,

\* M. de Maupas is right. The incident provoked a great deal of noise. Up till now, however, few voices, even among the staunchest partisans of the Empire and the greatest admirers of the Coup d'État, have been raised to fully exculpate the troops from the charge of having committed a merciless act of butchery, necessitated *perhaps* by the most elementary rules of warfare, but carried too far even then. For except in one instance, it has never been denied that shots were fired from one or more windows on the Boulevard Montmaitre. But this solitary evidence is worth a hundred others, especially to Englishmen, seeing that it was tendered by one of their own, Captain William Jesse, an officer in her Majesty's service and an eye-witness of the whole affair. He was not likely to have been swayed by political passions, and he decidedly stigmatised the "fusillade" as gratuitous and unprovoked. I am too far from home to quote his testimony in full, nor do I exactly remember the date of his letter to the *Times*, but it will be found between the 14th and 20th December, 1851. Truth compels this note, even from the translator of M. de Maupas' work. — *Trans*



Herbillon, and Marulaz of the Levasseur division took the insurgents in the rear by starting from the Church of St. Eustache and the lower parts of the Rues St. Denis and St. Martin.

At the Church of St. Eustache and the Rue Rambuteau the struggle was terrific. Colonel de Lourmel with the 51st and several battalions of the 19th and 43rd of the Line bore its brunt, though supported by a battery of artillery. There also the resistance was such as to make the attempt to carry the barricades without the aid of artillery a fruitless sacrifice of our soldiers' lives. Hence the barricades were thoroughly battered first by a heavy gun fire, after which the troops, headed by their officers, carried them at the point of the bayonet. In all these encounters, and especially at the Rue Rambuteau, the losses were considerable on both sides.

At the very moment of executing these movements General Levasseur attacked the key of the insurgents' position. He himself headed the first column, General Herbillon led the second, and, not losing touch of each other, they penetrated into the narrow streets of the St. Martin and Temple quarters, carrying the numerous obstacles before them. General Marulaz advanced in a parallel line with them and swept the Rue St. Martin and

adjacent streets by means of the artillery in his van, which cut a passage through the numerous entrenchments thrown up by the insurrection.

To complete the whole a skilful movement had been ordered by General Magnan. General de Courtigis left Vincennes with his brigade at the moment the Carrelet and Levasseur divisions started from their bases of operations. He slowly descended the Faubourg St. Antoine, overthrowing the barricades in his road; he also succeeded in barring the way to a considerable group of fugitives who had abandoned the central position to attempt a fresh stand in the quarters between the Place de la Bastille and the Barrière du Trône.

The plan of the insurgents did not stop at the systematic organisation of resistance in the centre of Paris, it embraced the whole of the capital, its faubourgs and the outskirts. It is thus that at La Chapelle St. Denis (not to be confounded with St. Denis itself) there were a great number of barricades, and that in the Faubourg St. Antoine the insurgents had raised some at the most important points.

On the left bank the pass-word had been given to keep to simple skirmishes, just sufficient to attract and occupy the troops of General Renaud. In this way the insurgents might at a given

moment move upon the bridges, affect a junction with their brethren on the right, and possess themselves of the Prefecture of Police, of the Palace of Justice, the Conciergerie, if their approaches were not sufficiently guarded.\* To carry out those instructions numerous hands perambulated the Faubourg St. Marceau. A few shots were fired here and there, but the rioters retreated at the appearance of the troops. At the Place Maubert the attitude was more aggressive, still more so in the Rue Dauphine, and at the *carrefour* Buci,† where a barricade was being thrown up. The resistance, however, was of short duration, and a mild charge of one company got the better of it.

It was under cover of those various feints that an important gathering had remained unmolested on the Quai aux Fleurs. It was the one which would move against the Prefecture of Police, the Palace of Justice, and the Conciergerie, by way of the Pont-Neuf and the Place Dauphine, and penetrate on the other side by the courtyard of the Sainte-Chapelle.

\* According to the plans of the insurgents the assault of the Prefecture of Police was to take place during night. But in the event of favourable circumstances it was to take place sooner. It will be seen shortly that the latter course was decided on.

† A place where four or more streets converge; from the Latin *quadrifurcus* *quatuor*, four; *furca*, fork.—*Trans.*

The forces protecting the Prefecture of Police at that moment were absolutely insufficient. They had been reduced during the evening of the 2nd, which was then an inopportune measure; but their further reduction during the day of the 4th, on the pretext of the combined operations, was a blunder in every sense. In proportion to the growth of the danger became the reduction of the forces, when it was imperative to increase them.

The Republican Guard was charged with the defence of all the bridges save the Pont-Neuf; hence it had to occupy eight of them. It furthermore supplied the posts on the island of St. Louis and the Cité, among which were those of the Palace of Justice, the Conciergerie, the Rue de Jérusalem, and the courtyard of the Sainte-Chapelle. This frittering into small groups, rendered necessary by the topography of the spot, left, as we have had already occasion to show, but few men to each position. As for the Pont-Neuf, it was originally kept, as we said, by a battalion of the 6th Light Infantry, and by some pieces of artillery properly got into position to sweep both issues. On the evening of the 2nd the cannon and two companies of the 6th Light Infantry were withdrawn; on the 4th, at the moment when the struggle became the sharpest, the authorities took away the remainder

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of the light infantry, and in this way threw open as wide as they could the entry to the Cité, namely the Pont-Neuf.

What was the reason of this ill-considered measure? It may be explained without being excused. The 6th Light Infantry formed part of the brigade of General Herbillon, who had his staff at the Hôtel de Ville, and the whole of whose forces were massed on the right bank. It was at the moment of the first threats of barricades in the neighbourhood of the Hôtel de Ville, on the 2nd December, that the General, thinking he would have need of all his troops, withdrew the two companies of light infantry from their positions at the Pont-Neuf. It was at the moment of the decisive movement on the 4th December that the same General, having received orders to bring up the whole of his contingent to the St. Denis and St. Martin quarters, recalled the remainder of his 6th Light Infantry. He had done so without a second thought, supposing that they would be replaced by other troops; but the 6th Light Infantry was not replaced, and for some time the Pont-Neuf remained absolutely undefended.

It was only by diminishing the other posts of the Cité that the guard of the Pont-Neuf could be reconstituted. But in thus reducing the former to,

their lowest limits, they became more and more insufficient to resist attack on one single point. It is thus that the gathering of the Quai aux Fleurs, skilfully taking advantage of the change of dispositions, made a rush at the Pont St. Michel, forced the passage, and stormed up the Rue de la Barillerie to the principal entrance of the Prefecture of Police.

This sudden invasion by the revolt of the approaches to the Prefecture, and the musketry charges by which it was accompanied, had put the agents and the employés on the alert. Each one had hurriedly snatched up some weapon and stood on the defence as far as the steps, where a small body of police agents had massed themselves.

An incident should be recorded here which was not without its salutary influence on those who witnessed it. One of my employés had received frequent reports from our agents about the island of the Cité being surrounded by the assailants, and had transmitted those reports to me. Suddenly he rushed into my room in a very excited state. "There is not a moment to lose; we are hemmed in on all points. In less than a quarter of an hour the Prefecture will be taken by storm; there being no troops, we are unable to defend ourselves: you'll be massacred. I bring you the only means

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of safety that remain—they are the keys to a door by which, under similar circumstances, one of your predecessors escaped with his life. Begin by sending away Mme. De Maupas and her child, your mother, and your young sister. I will give you a safe man to guide and protect them. As for me, I will accompany you to a house where you and yours will be secure until the most violent storm is over.”

Assuredly the step had been dictated by a generous feeling, but in the hour of supreme peril only one sentiment should animate a man's heart, that of duty, and this duty in my position was resistance to the last. I declined, as I was bound to do, the offer of my employé. I may be allowed to state here that Mme. de Maupas, my mother, and my sister, who were in a room adjacent to mine, and whom I was compelled to warn of the danger, protested energetically, and refused to separate themselves from me in this critical conjuncture.

But I was determined that no spirit of discouragement should demoralize the staff of the Prefecture at the moment when it wanted all its energy, and this determination imposed a duty upon me.

The news having become sufficiently alarming

since the morning, it was evident to me that the employé who had counselled flight obeyed the influence of a scare. His offers to go confirmed my first impressions. I took immediate steps to replace him, and I wished the reason of so sudden a dismissal to be known.

Several commissaries of police, several superintendents, were at this moment at the Prefecture, some awaiting my orders, others to acquaint me with the incidents that had occurred in their quarters. I had them all called to my room; some heads of the administrative departments had joined them. By a strange coincidence, at the moment I was about to address them, and as a kind of preamble to what I was going to say, a vigorous platoon fire made the windows rattle in their frames. "You see," I said to my subordinates, "the danger draws nigh. I know your courage wants no stimulating, but I wish you to understand that should we be buried beneath the walls, we ought under no circumstances to surrender the post confided to our honour. Only one among you has thought of flight. He has even offered me the insult of indicating the way; that one is no longer worthy of figuring in your ranks, I dismiss him from his situation." Then addressing him whom I intended to be his successor, I added, "You whom I know to be staunch and resolute,



take the place of him who wanted to abandon it. To your posts, gentlemen, there is not a moment to lose. Let every one do his duty. The reward for duty and devotion will come later on."

It would be difficult to describe the emotion caused by this incident, unforeseen by all who witnessed it. On leaving me each took up his post of defence.

Scarcely had the last commissary left my room than an unusual commotion was heard on the staircase that leads to the courtyard of the Sainte-Chapelle. Proceeding to it I met in one of the reception rooms the brigadier on duty; he told me that the Rue de la Barillerie was invaded by the mob, that the insurgents were masters of the Rue de Constantine, that they were lying in ambush in the houses, whence they fired on the mobile gendarmerie who had fallen back before them, and that in a few moments they would be at my gate.

Opening the window of one of the drawing rooms that looked on the courtyard of the Sainte Chapelle, I beheld the first insurgents enter it.

The surprise had been so rapid that the guard at the foot of my staircase, who were taking their meals at that moment, had scarcely time to rush to their arms; they were just closing up their ranks when they were saluted with a volley from the insurgents.

The municipal guards replied, and charging them at the bayonet they drove back their bold assailants. The first who entered the courtyard of the Sainte-Chapelle paid the attempt with his life. I saw him fall at the moment the window from which I was watching was shivered to atoms. In another hour the Cité was free, the Prefecture delivered from all danger, and each one received the commendation due to his behaviour and courage.

While writing those lines my memory naturally reverts to certain publications in which mendacity disputes the palm with ridicule. I began by despising them, thinking myself above such imputations, but circumstances compelled me one day to hand over to the law of my country such journals as had reproduced those pamphlets. The law condemned them. One of the pamphleteers was called M. Véron, the other is, alas! the poet gone astray in politics, M. Victor Hugo.

Who and what M. Véron was is pretty well remembered still in our days. He had acquired a large fortune which was freely spent with a group of familiars, men of pleasure and business. Those were the companions of his predilection, nevertheless he endeavoured to attract some political notabilities. As a matter of course I was bound to keep away from such a set. M. Véron owed me a

grudge for having replaced his friend M. Carlier at the Prefecture of Police. To this feeling was added later on another, which especially alienated such goodwill as there was still left towards me. I had been obliged when at the Ministry to deprive him of the direction of the *Constitutionnel* to confide it to an eminent publicist, the Viscount de la Guéronnière. I had simply performed a duty; but M. Véron swore to be revenged, and he fancied that no more favourable opportunity could present itself than his own version of the 2nd December in a book, poor enough in all conscience, which he entitled, "Les Mémoires d'un Bourgeois de Paris." He spared no slanderous fabrications, and it was as much to vent his spite as to give his publication the attraction of quasi-new disclosures that he manufactured the false, the absolutely false, dispatches with which he garnished his volume. We should add that he was not alone in this honourable business, and that his auxiliaries were certain personages who felt themselves aggrieved by my attitude and firmness. Through them he obtained some genuine dispatches; they had only to be travestied, and nothing was easier to a conscience as elastic as M. Véron's.

While on the subject we may be permitted to give both the authentic and the apocryphal dispatches.

Seeing that the troops told off for the defence of the Cité were taken from me, and that the attack on the Prefecture of Police commenced, it became my duty to obstinately claim the forces necessary to the defence of the important position entrusted to my care. The following dispatches on the subject were exchanged between M. de Morny, General Magnan, and myself.

“Prefect of Police to Minister of the Interior and General Magnan.

“*4th December, 1 50 P M.*

“A distressing symptom shows itself along the whole of the line, the frock-coats are helping with the barricades. The National Guards carry their rifles; peaceable folk complain bitterly that the Government abandons them; you must act, and with cannon.

“We are hemmed in by insurgents; they are firing away within a stone’s throw of my door.

“The *mairie* of the 6th arrondissement is taken. Not a moment to lose; send troops. Send a regiment and four pieces of artillery to the Prefecture.

“DE MAUPAS.”

This dispatch was followed almost immediately by another.

“Prefect of Police to General Magnan.

“*4th December, 2.15 P.M*

“I am afraid that the orders are either badly given or misunderstood; some artillery went back to Vincennes at midday, believing that everything was over, when everything was only beginning at that hour.

“This is the plan of the rebels: to keep the troops engaged at the barricades of the St. Martin quarter, to abandon the latter suddenly, to take the Prefecture by surprise, and to entrench themselves on the island.

“We are surrounded, and fighting is going on at our four corners. My cannon and my troops are taken from me when I am most sorely in need. Is there a misunderstanding somewhere? Send me what I ask you.

“The Faubourgs St. Jacques and St. Marceau are up in arms.

“DE MAUPAS.”

“Minister of the Interior to Prefect of Police.

“*4th December, 2.50. P.M.*

“Have you been attacked?

“DE MORNAY.”

“Prefect of Police to Minister of the Interior.

“*4th December, 3 P.M.*

“Yes, but the insurgents fled at our first volley ; several were killed.

“DE MAUPAS.”

It is the dispatches I give here and those I gave before which it has pleased MM. Véron and Victor Hugo to travesty, each according to his own liking. Yet the dispatches of M. Véron and those of M. Victor Hugo referring to the same fact are absolutely different. This would already supply the proof of one or the other version being apocryphal ; it will suffice to read them to become convinced that both are fabrications.

Let M. Véron be the first to speak. Here are his pseudo dispatches : “Prefect of Police to Minister of the Interior. Thursday, 4th December. Gatherings on the Pont-Neuf, firing on the Quai aux Fleurs ; dense mobs in the neighbourhood of the Prefecture of Police. They are firing through the railings of my gate. What am I to do ?” Answer fabricated by M. Véron and attributed to M. de Morny : “Reply by firing through your gate.”

M. Victor Hugo allows his invention greater flight. This is his version : “Prefect of Police to Minister of the Interior. Thursday, 4th December.

Barricades in the Rue Dauphine; I am hemmed in; tell General Sauboul. I am without troops. I cannot make it out. Maupas."

More dispatches, always of M. Victor Hugo's making: "Prefect of Police to Minister of the Interior. I am hemmed in. What am I to do? Maupas." Reply: "If you are ill go to bed. Morny."

"I shall be taken between crossfires. Maupas." Reply: "Go to bed. Morny."

"I am abandoned. Maupas." Reply: "Go to bed, you d—— fool. Morny."

After these various citations one cannot help asking one's self how the inventors of those false dispatches failed to perceive that they were shooting too wide of the mark by attributing such language to M. de Morny. He is even more slandered than I am hurt by being credited with such gross expressions.

I must repeat that the only genuine and authentic dispatches relating to that particular episode of the action are those I have given. Copies were taken of them by my orders and under my personal supervision.\* In manufacturing theirs MM.

\* The telegraphic service at the Prefecture of Police was organised with special care. It occupied a room adjacent to the private office of the Prefect. When I had to dispatch a message two of my secretaries

Véron and Victor Hugo were guilty of a wicked action. M. Véron indulged his revenge without minding the injury he inflicted upon truth. M. Victor Hugo allowed his imagination to supply there, as elsewhere, the absence of official documents which, it is scarcely necessary to say, never offended his eyes.

A painful spectacle indeed is a like decadence—to behold this splendid intellect, this pen fertile in magnificent creations, this former dignitary of the monarchy, this former peer of France, descend to the level of pamphleteer and to travesty the truth in that way! Sad, indeed! And in this pamphlet, in which everything is imposture and confusion, the poet by dint of vilifying everything and everybody did not even notice that he ended by speaking ill of himself. In publishing his “*Histoire d’un Crime*” M. Victor Hugo’s aim was to prove that during the December days he had been the organiser of resistance, the hero of the insurrection. Yet by a strange contradiction he shows us, without wishing it, that in those days of combat his courage went no farther than to ask of others the sacrifice of their

wrote it from my dictation. When one arrived they also took a double copy of it. Two minutes were taken in that way; one was sent to the archives of the Prefecture, the other remained in the office of the Prefect’s service. After which a copy was sent to each destination, and another copy taken for my personal use.



lives, while he preciously kept his own out of all danger. This time it is our turn to put him in the dock and to interrogate him.

When on the 4th December those bands of rioters whom he had called to arms came to attack our residence, one of the principal seats of the governmental power, why was not M. Victor Hugo at their head? Why was not he at the post of danger, or at the post of honour, as he chose to call it in his new language? What other point of the revolt could be more important to him or offer a more signal peril? No; he himself reveals to us his prudent peregrinations; he went in search of glory by groping about in the obscurity of some dark back shops of the faubourgs. We repeat, instead of boldly marching to the fire, M. Victor Hugo hid himself. He himself tells us: "During the last two days," he says, "we had changed our retreat seventeen times, sometimes moving from one end of Paris to the other." Such an agitation affords not the most convincing proof of this belligerent disposition which the poet-pamphleteer endeavours to parade at each page of his book.

Nevertheless let us listen to the resolute way in which he pledges his personal co-operation to his companions. Addressing himself in the self-same back shop to a workman who, armed to the teeth,

comes to inquire the pass-word, he says : " Are you sure of your movement for to-night ? "

" We have prepared it and count on it," says the workman.

" In that case," says the illustrious poet once more, " as soon as the first barricade is made I wish to be behind it ; come and fetch me. "

" Where ? "

" Wherever I may be. " \*

The reply was vague, consequently M. Victor Hugo is never to be found when they want to offer him the honours of the battle.† We should have been glad to think that this persistency in keeping

\* Victor Hugo, " Histoire d'un Crème," vol. i. p. 168.

† The back shop spoken of by M. Victor Hugo, and of which we spoke ourselves, namely, that of Auguste, a wine dealer, situated in the Rue de la Roquette, seems to have played an important part in the steps taken by the illustrious poet to organise the insurrection. M. Victor Hugo narrates his expedition in the following terms :—" I had some trouble to find the door of Auguste in the Rue de la Roquette again. Nearly all the shops were closed, which made the street very dark. At last I perceived, behind a shop window, a light illuminating a pewter counter. Beyond the counter and behind a partition equally provided with windows and hung with white curtains another light could vaguely be seen, and two or three shadows of men seated at a table. That was the place, and I went in. The door in opening rung a bell. At the sound the door of the glazed partition that divided the front from the back shop opened and Auguste appeared. He recognised me at once and came towards me," &c. M. Victor Hugo's share in the events of December amounts to a few expeditions of this kind and to his presence at some meetings, not involving any danger to himself.

at a respectful distance from the barricades was owing to his ignorance of their exact situation, but he was at any rate perfectly aware of this attack on the Prefecture of Police ; he had been warned and warned again ; he will tell us so himself.

“ About nine o'clock,” says M. Victor Hugo, “ an ex-captain of the 8th legion of the National Guard of 1848, named Jourdan, came to offer us his aid.

“ He was a daring fellow, one of those who on the morning of the 24th February, 1848, had executed the bold surprise movement on the Hôtel de Ville. We charged him to repeat it, and to extend it to the Prefecture of Police. He knew how to set about it. He told us that he had but few men, but that he would order them to quietly occupy during the day certain strategical points in houses on the Quais de Gèvres, Lepelletier, and in the Rue de la Cité, and that if, in the event of the struggle increasing in the centre of Paris, the men of the *Coup d'État* were compelled to withdraw their troops from the Prefecture of Police and the Hôtel de Ville, the attack would be begun immediately on those two points. Let us say at once that Captain Jourdan kept his promise. Unfortunately, as we learnt on that evening, he began perhaps a little too soon. As he had foreseen, the place of the Hôtel de Ville was almost entirely

empty of troops. At a certain moment General Herbillon had been obliged to abandon it with his cavalry to take the barricades of the centre in the rear. The attack of the republicans was made at the very instant—firing was opened from the windows of the Quai Lepelletier; but the left of the column was still at the bridge of Arcola; a line of skirmishers had been posted in front of the Hôtel de Ville by a major named Larochette; the 44th changed front and came back, and the attempt miscarried.”

In fact, thanks to the energetic resistance the insurgents met with in the very courtyard of the Prefect of Police the attempt failed.

One more word to finish here with M. Victor Hugo. In his “*Histoire d'un Crime*,” vol. ii. p. 162, the poet pretends that a reward was offered for his arrest; in order to increase his revolutionary importance he commits a complete error. We were perfectly acquainted with M. Victor Hugo's residence; we might have arrested him a dozen times during the three December days; we had no motive for doing so, and it was with our consent that he was allowed, like M. de Girardin and some other idealogists, to freely continue his agitation. While the insurrection attempted to get possession of the Prefecture of Police, the movement so skilfully

combined by General Magnan proceeded. At five o'clock it was completely executed; it had been carried out with as much precision as ability.

The Carrelet and Levasseur divisions had operated their junction, borne down all obstacles, pursued the fugitive insurgents, and restored the circulation. General Renaud had kept his ground on the left bank, and General de Courtigis had made the Faubourg St. Antoine safe against any new invasion.

For more than three hours Paris had heard the uninterrupted thunder of cannon and musketry fire. The struggle had been obstinate, but unequal from the beginning. No force could have stood against the army of General Magnan, against its bravery and dash; and it speaks volumes for the powerful organization of the insurrection, for the vigour of the combatants it enlisted, to have prolonged resistance as it did. The proof of the ardour by which the latter were animated will be found in the fact of their having gathered the scattered material of their overthrown works and run up new barricades ere the troops had regained their quarters, when they had scarcely turned their backs upon their former positions.

This time the St. Martin, St. Denis, and the Temple quarters were spared the melancholy privi-

lege of being the centre of the revolt, the movement tended in the direction of the seat of the government. In this it conformed to revolutionary tradition. In 1830 and 1848 the St. Antoine and St. Martin quarters had shared the honours of the first engagements, after which the action had been removed to the neighbourhood of the Bank, the Louvre, and the Palais-Royal.

On the 4th December the insurrection had to proceed a step farther. From the Tuileries it had to reach the Elysée. It is to this end that it left behind it the scene of its last engagements to move on the Rue St. Honoré, the Place Notre-Dame des Victoires, the neighbourhood of the Bank, and the Bourse. Nevertheless it kept its base of operations in the Rues du Petit-Carreau and Montorgueil. But a regiment, the 19th of the Line, occupied the Palais-Royal, and by a bold charge swept the Place Notre-Dame des Victoires, covered both the Bank and the Bourse, and stormed the entrenchments of the Rues Pagevin and Bourbon-Ville-neuve.

Thus dislodged from their outposts, the insurgents retreated once more upon the Church of St. Eustache, the Rues Montorgueil and du Petit-Carreau, where the fanatic Dussoubs was haranguing the people and directing the battle. In those two

streets a series of solid works had been constructed, and a night attack offered perils the more formidable that the houses were occupied by the revolt. The troops were fired at from the windows and from the cellar casements. The position was not tenable; Colonel de Lourmel saw it; he put himself at the head of his troops and succeeded in carrying the last refuge of the insurgents.

So rapid and complete a result had not been obtained without some heavy sacrifice. The killed and wounded were many on both sides. Dussoubs, like Baudin, was killed at the head of the rioters. The other engagements were but the pale reflex of the energetic resistance of that evening. A few barricades were still thrown down here and there, but the chiefs had ceased the battle, they had deferred the resumption of the struggle till the next day, the 5th. A few of the forlorn hope only kept up the agitation, and fired from some dark back slums on our soldiers or on our agents going their rounds.

We had foreseen the fate of this last attempt of the insurgents; it was condemned to an inevitable check, and it was almost certain that at a given moment in the evening demoralisation would enter their camp; they would fly to their homes or to their ordinary meeting places. The latter were

known to us. We had posted pickets of our agents in their vicinity. They had orders to watch their goings and comings, and above all to arrest suspected individuals who bore upon them the traces of their share in the fight. Thanks to those measures numerous arrests were made during that evening, and the insurrection was deprived of several of its chiefs. Those arrests were not without danger to those charged with their execution. Most of those arrested were still armed, and made a desperate struggle to escape our agents; three of these brave fellows were seriously wounded.

A great many of the leaders, especially those who had taken no part in the second attempt, were assembled in conference to decide upon the measures for the next day. If we had not in every one of those assemblies a man in our pay, we had at least some in the most important of them. It is through the latter that we were kept informed of the dissensions that existed in the revolutionary camp.

Some—those who had not fought, and who during those two days had only lent the cause a moral and literary support—continued their demands for a struggle to the bitter end. The motive of their persistence was this: we no longer fight to conquer, but to keep the provinces in suspense. If we



resist, the uprising will spread to the departments, and through them we may regain our advantages here. If, on the contrary, we lay down our arms we discourage the provinces, and everything is lost; nothing remains but to bend beneath the yoke of the conqueror and to submit to his will.\*

The others who had taken an active part in the struggle, who had been able to measure the power and stability of the forces of which the Government disposed, declared a prolonged conflict impossible, and insisted upon a postponement of it till more propitious days. In their opinion there was no longer the least chance of success. A goodly number of chiefs were either killed or taken. The workmen from the outskirts had, on leaving the barricades, declared that they would not put in an appearance the next morning; they didn't see the use of being maimed without benefiting the cause. As for the provinces, no reliance was placed on them. From the manner in which the Govern-

\* From the papers seized at the time of the arrests we have been able to judge the rapid method by which the Paris revolutionaries and those of the provinces communicated. As early as the morning of the 2nd Paris had told the provinces to prepare the uprising, and from a great many points, above all from the centre and the south, the provinces said to Paris, "We are ready, we'll begin at the first signal." It is those assurances that encouraged certain leaders to prolong the struggle. We shall soon see how well those that gave them meant to keep their word—to take to arms and to vigorously engage the struggle.

ment had taken its measures in Paris, it was easy to judge that it had neglected nothing in the departments. There remained no hope of success.

The decision that prevailed in the end was a kind of mutual concession. It was arranged that from seven in the morning until mid-day the rebels would repair in small groups to those points where fresh barricades might be attempted. Once there the attitude of the Government would be watched, and if it left Paris, as it had done on the 4th, without troops during the morning, the insurgents would begin reconstructing anew at mid-day in those quarters where a sympathy with the cause might be relied upon. Accredited emissaries would keep up communications between the groups in the public thoroughfares and the acting committees; the latter were to give the signal either for a fresh attempt or for a final retreat at mid-day.

The Elysée had attentively kept pace with every movement of the troops, with every incident of the day. The dispatches from the commander-in-chief of the army of Paris and from the Prefect of Police succeeded each other at brief intervals. Besides those means of information the generals engaged had frequently sent their aides-de-camp to directly acquaint the Prince with the aspect of the struggle. One of those communications had

caused a profound and natural emotion at the Elysée. At the moment when he was engaged with the barricades of the Rue St. Denis, General de Cotte, judging the resistance much more energetic than he had supposed it would be, had directly notified to the Prince the strength of the insurrection. The general called attention to the episodes of 1830 and 1848; he deemed the attack to be as serious as it had been then; he recommended the most energetic measures, and at the same time warned the Elysée to be on its guard. The insurgents might get as far, and solid means of defence were necessary.

General de Cotte was one of the most resolute officers in the army. Brave amongst the bravest, his coolness of temper in action was sufficiently known not to lay itself open to the suspicion of being influenced by the excitement of the moment. What he said must be true, and it would be well to take heed of it. Scarcely had the aide-de-camp left the Elysée than Colonel Fleury, the most intimate adviser of the Prince, entered his private room and submitted a plan in the event of the insurrection getting to the gates of the Elysée, the defence of which was beset by many difficulties, the security of which was by no means sufficient. There should be no hesitation in abandoning the

residence, exposed on all sides, in order to retreat to a spot where organised resistance became possible, where one would not only be safe against all surprise, but where a regular siege might be sustained. Colonel Fleury proposed the removal to the Tuileries, and the thorough fortifying of its approaches. In this way, far from seeming to take flight, one drew closer to the centre of action, and might take up a position offering every condition of security. This plan suited the Prince, and without delay he charged its author, Colonel Fleury, to go and arrange for its execution with the Minister for War.

An hour afterwards General Rollin received orders to put the Tuileries in a state of defence, and the most ample powers to execute his mission. He was to get the necessary cannon and war material from the fort of Mont Valérien. Night would be taken advantage of to move the material. At daybreak on the 5th General Rollin was to have everything ready, and the Prince-President would remove to the Tuileries. But the news of the evening, the defeat of the insurgents, their impossibility to resume the offensive, had changed the aspect of affairs. General de Cotte himself came to say, "We are masters of the position." Similar assurances came both from the Prefecture

of Police and headquarters at the self-same time. Towards two o'clock in the morning, and again by the advice of Colonel Fleury, the orders to General Rollin were countermanded, and the Prince-President remained at the Elysée. Everything from that moment led us to hope that the most difficult days were over.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### IMAGINARY EXECUTIONS.

The Morning of the 5th December.—The Troops go out once more.—  
The last of the Barricades.—Paris at Peace —Order of the Day of  
General de Saint-Arnaud.—The Number of the Dead and Wounded.  
—The Impostures of our Detractors.—The Number of Arrests.—  
The Decree on the Voting withdrawn —Removal of the Generals-  
Deputies from Mazas to Ham.—The Liberations at Vincennes and  
at Mont Valérien.—General de Courtigis and M. Odilon Barrot.—  
The ex-Members set free in spite of themselves

DURING the night of the 5th I had been enabled to communicate to the Government, and to General Magnan in particular, the programme of the insurgents. The day of the 4th had taught the authorities wisdom, and this time my counsel was listened to.

The resumption of the struggle had to be prevented, tranquillity was to be restored to Paris. I asked for an important display of troops, for strong patrols in the turbulent quarters, and for the occupation of the strategical points indicated in the original plan of the Minister for War.

In fact, from an early hour on the morning of the 5th the troops left their barracks, and both Paris and its outskirts were occupied in every direction.

Only a few slight barricades had been thrown up here and there by some of the fanatics, principally at the Barrière Rochechouart, on the Boulevard Poissonnière, at the Red-Cross, and at la Chapelle St. Denis. They were carried by a simple charge, and their defenders took flight at the first volley. Some of them paid this belated resistance with their lives. The principal task of the troops during this morning was the dispersing of the mobs collected on various points by the persistent provocation of the leaders. A few charges with the bayonet made an end of them, and, protected by the army, our agents were able to lay hands on several of the most desperate rioters.

At twelve o'clock the sections and the committees sent orders in all directions to cease the struggle, to hide without delay the arms and the ammunition, to refrain from all further gathering, and to provoke by no fresh manifestation the rigour of the army or of the police. Between twelve and two o'clock the streets resumed their ordinary aspect as if by enchantment.

But the experience of the past had taught the military authorities, and what had been omitted on the 3rd at the moment when it should have been done, was carried out on the 5th at the hour when the danger was a hundredfold less. After the over-

throw of the last barricades, after the dispersing of all the gatherings, the troops bivouacked in the principal thoroughfares, and occupied whole houses at the corners of such streets where the renewal of the insurrection seemed possible. Every possible measure to finally discourage the revolt and to reassure peaceable folk was ostensibly taken.

Towards four in the afternoon traffic was restored, the shops were open once more, and Paris resumed its ordinary aspect. A few groups wandered about the neighbourhoods that had been the scene of the strife from mere curiosity, but their bearing and behaviour was altogether inoffensive, and the agents confined themselves to preventing all obstruction. The meetings of the chiefs of the sections, those of a few of the ex-members who had persistently sent their unhappy victims to unvarying defeat, also broke up. Save for a few small groups conspiracy was at an end, and this parting sigh of the revolt found its vent only in maledictions indulged with closed doors against the victor.

General de Saint-Arnaud's order of the day told the army that its mission was finished, the Paris population that it could quietly set about its business, France that the insurrection was defeated and the new Government firmly established.

Subjoined is the order of the day :—



“SOLDIERS!

“You have accomplished this day a great act in your military existence. You have saved the country from anarchy and plunder, you have saved the Republic. You have shown yourselves what you always will be, brave, devoted, indefatigable. France admires and thanks you. The President of the Republic will never forget your devotion.

“The victory could not be doubtful; the true people, the law-abiding are with you.

“In every garrison of France your companions in arms are proud of you, and would if needs be follow your example.

“A. DE SAINT-ARNAUD.”

The struggle over, a painful duty remained to be fulfilled—to ascertain the losses our gallant army had suffered. At the same time the number of the dead and wounded of the insurgents was made up.

The truth on this point has been greatly perverted. To re-establish it we confine ourselves to the reproduction of the extract from the official report of the Prefect of Police to the President of the Republic, dated 15th December, 1851. The figures it gives were obtained from the best

sources and are beyond the possibility of controversy.\*

If we wish to ascertain the losses on both sides, statistics resulting from minute inquiries enable us to give the official and indisputable number of the killed and wounded :—

## KILLED.

Military (officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates)	26
Individuals belonging to the lookers-on rather than to the insurgents	8
Insurgents killed on the spot	116
Insurgents who died at their homes in consequence of their wounds	59
	<u>175</u>
Total killed	<u>209</u>

## WOUNDED.

Military	184
Insurgents	<u>115</u>
Total wounded	<u>299</u>

Subsequent to this report some more deaths attributed to wounds received during the struggle of the 3rd and 4th December occurred at the civil and military hospitals and at private residences. It was also ascertained that among the revolutionaries by profession some that had disappeared and who were supposed to have gone to foreign countries had died of their injuries; there were about

\* "Rapport du Préfet de Police sur les événements du Deux-Décembre, 1851." (Imprimerie de Charles Lahure, Rue de Vaugirard, 9)

twenty or twenty-five. A few others that were wounded had been sheltered by staunch friends who hid them from the police. But the number of killed and wounded does not very materially differ from the statement contained in the report of the 15th December, and is not any way near the fancy figures given by the pamphleteers of the times. About six hundred killed and wounded, such is the strict truth.\*

It will be asked how a severe struggle like that of the 4th December did not cause a greater number of victims. We have already indicated the reasons in the course of this narrative. The fact is easily explained on the side of the insurgents. They fought behind the shelter of solid works; the bullets and balls struck against the barricades. Therefore it was only at the moment of the assault that they ran a serious risk, and they succeeded in cleverly shielding themselves. The moment they considered the works confided to their defence as no longer offering sufficient security, they entrenched themselves at once behind another

\* To those who would dispute the exactness of our figures we offer an easy method of verification. In Paris no more than elsewhere people do not die without their decease being registered. If the number of deaths of the days of the battle be examined, it will be found that it only exceeds the normal daily number by such figures as we have given.

barricade. They had everywhere secured their retreat with a rare foresight. Only those—and they were but a small number—who were absolutely blinded by the excitement of the struggle awaited the shock of the troops and paid their resistance with their lives. But nowhere did the insurgents show themselves in masses and without being covered, and it is only in those conditions that the fire could have done great damage

On the side of the troops, the prudence of the officers protected the soldiers against the perils of their ardour. Their movements were conducted with great circumspection, and at the dangerous moment of the charge the impulse was such that the insurgents, as we have already said, preferred to get away rather than defend themselves. Besides, the latter were very badly armed, and more skilled in the use of the knife—to which, however, they dared not resort—than in the use of a weapon requiring qualities rare to be found in an improvised combatant.

But the point on which the writers of the period, not to say those of the present day, have dwelt with the greatest relish is that of the nocturnal executions, accomplished amidst the profoundest mystery.

Well, those pretended nocturnal executions, those inhuman butcheries, should be brought to

light once for all; the truth should be spoken with regard to them. Well, then, the whole is nothing better than a tissue of lies, a dastardly and odious calumny against a Government which has only used its force within the strict measure of the necessities of the struggle.

No doubt some insurgents taken with their arms upon them were shot, but they were shot, some on the barricades continuing to fight and refusing to surrender, threatening and striking when summoned to abandon all resistance; others in the Passage du Saumon when caught in the act of murdering our soldiers; finally one in the Rue de Jérusalem at the moment he attempted to cut his way into the Prefecture of Police.

And we must specify here. The number of those executed is included in the number of the insurgents killed on the spot. They amount, as we have already shown, to 116. In estimating at 40, according to our and General Magnan's reports, the number of insurgents shot, we are above rather than below the truth.

There, and there only, lies the truth. No one knew and still knows it better than he who writes these lines. He does not shrink from any avowal; he fears none of the responsibilities his conscience prompted him to undertake; he knows what is

due to history, and he gives it this due, unhesitatingly pledging his honour as to the exactness of his narrative.

Besides, it is at the moment of the struggle itself that those abominable calumnies were invented and made current. The hatred of the vanquished explains their enormous mendacity. At that period everything was brought into play to give credit to those monstrous fables, which already at the date of the 15th December, 1851, evoked an energetic protest from the Prefect of Police in his official report.\*

“Must I,” he asks, “take note here of an infamous calumny which certain people have not scrupled to spread, without assuredly believing in it themselves? They have mentioned nocturnal executions in the Champ de Mars and in the outskirts of Paris. This is nothing less than a detestable falsehood. The insurgents have been treated with all possible moderation and humanity, treated as the vanquished by generous victors.

“Sparing of their victory and their strength, the army and the authorities have disdained reprisal.”

And now that the truth has been said, let us

\* “Rapport du Préfet de Police sur les événements du Deux-Décembre, 1851,” p. 21.

confront it with the inventions of M. Victor Hugo. What abominable fiction! and what boldness it required to dare create, as he has done, scenes in which every word from the beginning to the end was false and chimerical. Let us listen to the inventor of these tragic scenes. The first one is laid at the Tuileries.

“An hour after midnight,” says M. Victor Hugo, “a great noise was heard from outside; soldiers carrying torches entered the vaults; the prisoners who were sleeping awoke with a start; an officer shouted to them to get up.

“They were taken out as they had been brought in, pell-mell.

“As they came out they were put in pairs haphazard and a sergeant counted them aloud. No questions as to their names, their profession, their family connections, what they were and whence they came, were asked. Their number sufficed for the task in hand.

“In that way three hundred and thirty-seven were counted.”\*

Three hundred and thirty-seven! Nothing is wanting in this invention. He specifies with a

\* Victor Hugo, “*Histoire d'un Crime*,” vol. ii. p. 160. Calmann Lévy, Paris.

marvellous assurance even to the number of these imaginary victims.

The poet spares no cost; he continues the fable by giving us the most minute details of the starting of the column and its journey. Let us still listen to M. Victor Hugo. He has created those personages; let us see the fate he reserves to them.

“Once counted they were ranged in a serried column, still two by two and holding each other’s arm. They were not bound, but on both sides of the column, to left and to right, were three rows of soldiers, with rifles loaded and in serried files; a battalion in front, a battalion behind the column. They were told to close up, and started enveloped by this moving mass of bayonets.

“The Tuileries left behind, they turned to the right and followed the quay as far as the Place de la Concorde. They crossed the bridge and turned to the right once more. They passed the Esplanade of the Invalides and reached the deserted quay of the Gros-caillou.

“At the Pont de Jéna, they turned to the left and got into the Champ de Mars.

“There they were all shot.”

And we even trouble ourselves to answer this fable. No column of insurgents, not even that of



the three hundred and thirty-seven of M. Victor Hugo, left the vaults of the Tuileries to go to the Champ de Mars, either by way of the Pont de Jéna or by any other route. *Not an insurgent, not one, was shot in the Champ de Mars.* We challenge M. Victor Hugo to support the smallest of his assertions with one authentic document, by one single evidence from no matter whom. He tells us of two battalions which he places, as he is in the habit of doing on the stage, one behind, one in front of his victims. First of all, to which regiment did those battalions belong? M. Victor Hugo, who shows himself so minutely informed, ought indisputably to know this. Let him tell us. The illustrious poet is probably not aware that two battalions on a war footing count no less than two thousand men. Some of these two thousand men are certainly dead by now; but the greatest number must be still alive. And is it likely that these officers and soldiers, both witnesses of and actors in this abominable drama, would have waited until this day to publicly manifest their indignation. If under the Empire fear imposed silence perhaps, would not they under the Republic have found their absolute liberty of speech. Will it be denied that among those surviving officers and soldiers there must be a

certain number who this day profess republican opinions? Would not these, at any rate at this period of invective against the 2nd December, have eagerly seized the opportunity for a similar revelation, to furnish the men who insult us with a truth to substitute for their falsehoods? And even admitting this Republican abnegation, this excessive discretion, this kind of conspiracy to keep silent, may not we suppose that it is among these officers and soldiers, who took a share in this massacre in the Champ de Mars, that M. Victor found the witnesses who have so minutely informed him? The depositions of those ocular witnesses, are they not in M. Victor Hugo's possession? Let him publish them. And if perchance he thinks us too exacting we'll render his impossible justification still more convenient to him. We'll be satisfied with his finding us *one officer, one non-commissioned officer, one private* who confesses to having belonged to this dark and mysterious escort, to having been present at this execution of three hundred and thirty-seven men; if M. Victor does so, we shall tender him our most humble and unqualified apology. But this one invention was not enough. Once the history of one execution written, it cost but a few words to say that this terrible scene was renewed each night. In fact the poet adds:—

“Besides, let us say at once, the wholesale executions were renewed each night after the 3rd of December. Sometimes they took place in the Champ de Mars, sometimes at the Prefecture of Police, sometimes in both places at once.

“When the prisons were full, M. de Maupas said, ‘Take them away to be shot.’”

We are absolutely weary with denying. Let us say, however, that like the execution of the three hundred and thirty-seven, those other executions in the Champ de Mars and the Prefecture of Police never existed save in the ever-dramatic imagination of M. Victor Hugo.

But the climax of M. Victor Hugo’s impudence, and of his clumsiness of invention as well, is shown in the few lines with which the poet-historian closes his chapter.

“The 13th,” he says, “the massacres were not ended yet. On the morning of that day just before dawn a *solitary wayfarer* going along the Rue St. Honoré noticed between two rows of cavalry men three heavily laden covered waggons coming up the street. Their traces might be easily followed by the blood that oozed from their doors. They came from the Champ de Mars, and were going to the Montmartre Cemetery. They were full of corpses.”

That M. Victor Hugo should have laid the action of those stories of executions at the very moment of the strife, when the cannon thundered in the streets of Paris, when the whiz of the rifle bullet was heard night and day, well and good; there was some sort of pretext. He may have confounded the noise of the discharges from the barricades from which he kept so prudently away with the imaginary rattle of the pretended executions in the Champ de Mars. But to show us wholesale executions, waggons full of bodies on the 13th, eight days after Paris had resumed an absolute calm, assuredly this is presuming too much upon the gullibility of his readers. Would not the whole of Paris have heard the melancholy reports? We once more ask M. Victor Hugo to produce one single witness, be it only his "solitary wayfarer." \*

\* Here again we must repeat what we have said. As a natural consequence of those chimerical executions of which M. Victor Hugo speaks, the number of the dead would have necessarily been very considerable each day; it would have materially increased the normal daily figure of the deaths in Paris from the 4th to the 13th. Yet, by examining the registers from the 5th to the 13th December, 1851, it will be found that the number of deaths in the city of Paris is within a decimal fraction more or less the same as that of the corresponding period of the previous years.

M. Emile Zola is right when he accused the disciples of the Romantic school and their master, M. Victor Hugo, of gratuitously

In terminating those sickening quotations, I cannot help pointing out the guilt, the serious guilt, towards his conscience, towards his country, of him who, for the sole purpose of injuring, invents calumnies as odious as those we, in order to condemn them, have reproduced, and by so doing conferred an honour upon them which they do not deserve.

On the subject of the number of arrests made during those December days, people have equally indulged the most erroneous comments. The same official report of the Prefect of Police also gives the indisputable number of individuals arrested at the date of the 4th December. The report is couched in the following terms : \*—

“The number of arrests has equally been the subject of statistics of which I must at least

insulting people's credulity. Why, if M. Victor Hugo absolutely wanted three covered waggons and a solitary wayfarer for his *mise en scène*, why did he not lay his action elsewhere than in the Rue St. Honoré. It is of all the Paris streets the last where there would be *one solitary wayfarer*. Close by there is and was then a market as large as Covent Garden, and just before daybreak the street is absolutely crowded with vehicles of all descriptions. In addition, unless these three covered vans and their escort were absolutely bent upon a constitutional, there was no necessity to come through the Rue St. Honoré. Their way from the Champ de Mars to the Montmartre cemetery lay in quite a different direction.—*Trans.*

\* “Rapport du Préfet de Police sur les événements du Deux-Décembre,” p. 22, 561.

record the substance here. Two thousand one hundred and thirty-three political arrests were made, in which number figure two hundred and sixteen representatives. Only twenty-nine of them are still detained at St. Pélagie, where they are placed in the most favourable conditions; the other prisoners have been removed to the forts of Bicêtre and Ivry, where they remain at the disposal of the military authorities, who are deliberating with regard to them."

If the cessation of the struggle had restored material tranquillity, an important decision of the Government had brought back considerable appeasement to the public mind. The decree relating to the manner of voting had been rescinded. Taking count of the warnings with which it had been assailed, of the numerous reports I had communicated, the Minister of the Interior had replaced the decree of the 2nd December by a new one, which abrogated the manner of voting in the registers.\*

"The voting will take place," ran the new decree, "by secret polling, by an 'aye' or a 'no,' by means of a written or printed voting paper." Public opinion energetically claimed this, and the

\* See the *Moniteur Universel* of the 5th December, 1851.

satisfaction accorded to it resulted in a beneficent slackening of the strained situation.

Article 4 of the new decree added :—

“The poll will be open during the days of the 20th and 21st December in the administrative seat of each commune from eight in the morning till four in the afternoon.”

People could not charge Louis Napoleon with abusing his power, henceforth undisputed, by keeping the dictature in his hands. The convoking of the electoral committees had been the first act of his new authority. Nor had he suffered any delay to occur in their meeting save that strictly necessary to the material preparations for the polling.

The 21st December was the last stage of this obstinate struggle began by the various parties two years previously against the Prince and against the immense majority of the country. The 21st December was the day of the dénouement so long waited for. On that day France would say whether she approved or condemned the act that had just been accomplished. If she gave it her sanction she emerged at last from the perilous darkness of the revolution to lay the foundation of a government in which the serious guarantees of order and stability were united.

We have already pointed out the care with which the Government of Louis Napoleon avoided, during those troublous days it had just passed through, not only all useless rigour, but also all severity not justified by the absolute necessity of the State. The days of the 3rd and 4th December have abundantly proved the necessity of the preventive arrests of the generals-deputies. What dangerous burden would not their freedom have proved to them at the moment of the struggle? To have shared this struggle, to have placed themselves at the head of those bands of insurgents in order to lead them against those valiant legions of which they had been the well-beloved and respected chiefs, to fire on their brothers-in-arms, and, if fortune had smiled on them, to have inflicted upon this valorous army the humiliation of defeat, such would have been the series of poignant trials to sustain.

Not to share the struggle, to remain passive lookers-on at the uprising they had provoked by their attitude, by their language, by their votes in the Chamber — to behold those ill-fated beings, misled by their excitations, shed their blood and not to give at least the consolation and encouragement of their active complicity—would this have proved a more acceptable way out of the difficulty? To what bitter recriminations would not they have



become exposed? What insults and accusations would not have been showered upon them? Would not the words at the very sound of which the soldier cowers—traitor and coward—have been incessantly dinned in their ears?

Betwixt these two fatal situations, to one of which a terrible dilemma condemned them, which to choose? And if ever captivity could become desirable assuredly it must have been in those days to those illustrious generals. It shielded the responsibility so rashly pledged by them, to say nothing of their lives; it saved their honour at the cost of a few days' liberty.

We only intended Mazas as a provisional sojourn for those prisoners of State. Ham was their final destination; their removal thither was to take place during the night of the 2nd-3rd December. But the attributes of the Prefect of Police stopped at the department of the Seine; hence it was the Minister of the Interior upon whom devolved the duty of removing the ex-members.\* I had instructed the governor of Mazas to deliver up his prisoners under the conditions arranged. I had at the same time provided for their safe departure. My functions terminated there.

\* The Prefect of Police has no authority whatsoever over the prisons outside Paris and the department of the Seine, they come within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Minister of the Interior.

Fancy, then, my surprise when at the hour fixed for their departure I found that the most indispensable measures had been omitted. The Ministry of the Interior had occupied itself neither with the means of transport nor with the measures of surveillance during the journey from Paris to Ham, nor with the organisation of a relay of special warders in the interior of the prison. A squadron of the 7th Lancers, which was to escort the carriages from Mazas to the Northern Railway Station, as well as the agents I had posted along the whole of the route, had to wait for hours until the Minister of the Interior recognised the necessity of adjourning the departure until the next day. The following morning I judged it prudent to offer the Minister of the Interior, notwithstanding the extreme need I had of all my people, to supply him with the staff necessary for the transfer. The Minister eagerly accepted this encroachment upon his functions, and finally, in the night of the 3rd-4th December, the ex-members destined to quit Mazas set out for Ham.

At Ham also the want of foresight of the ministerial authorities showed itself, because on their return the commissaries informed me of the utter absence of organisation in the most essential arrangements. I acquainted the Minister of the Interior with these facts in the following dispatch:

“Prefect of Police to Minister of the Interior.

“6th December.

“The commissaries of police just returned from Ham have noted all absence of organisation in the service at the prison. It is most important that a service of surveillance first and a personal service for the prisoners also should be organised without delay. A few police agents have been left behind as a provisional arrangement.

“DE MAUPAS.”

Among the prisoners transferred to Ham were Generals Cavaignac, Bedeau, Changarnier, Le Flô, de Lamoricière, and Colonel Charras. At his own request M. Thiers had been allowed to remain in Paris for the time being.

Besides those ex-members there remained a considerable number at Mazas, Vincennes, and at Mont Valérien. At the former place we principally kept the members of the Mountain and such fanatics as it would have been dangerous to set at liberty. At Vincennes and at Mont Valérien were especially those members of the Right and the moderate republicans of the Left from whom we no longer had anything to fear after the events accomplished, and above all, after the satisfaction they had given themselves of manifesting their

disapproval by the demonstrations of the 2nd December. .

What were we to do with this fraction of the erstwhile chamber? We were unanimous upon the point. Their liberation was decided on. A certain number of those short-term prisoners had returned to their homes, some at their own request or at that of their families, others on the initiative of the Prince, of the Minister of the Interior, or on mine.\* I was naturally charged with the setting at liberty of those who were still detained; but my first orders to this effect met with sufficiently curious difficulties. At Vincennes, as at Mont Valérien, the tranquil mass of ex-members who had only engaged in the hurly-burly of the 10th arrondissement for conscience' sake, or out of consideration to their electors, scarcely waited till the doors were opened; they made joyously for their homes, thankful not to have paid more dearly for their attempt at resistance. On the other hand, a certain number protested against being set at liberty without their express solicitations. We were compelled to summon them to leave the place, and our summons was of no avail.

\* Several ex-members to whom the order for their liberation was communicated refused to avail themselves of it, not wishing to separate their fate from that of their colleagues.

Matters had assumed a curious aspect indeed, notably at Vincennes. General de Courtigis, who came to render an account of the resistance he encountered, gave me in his own military way an amusing sketch of his reception from those of the ex-members who declined their liberty. "The most obstinate in his protests," he said, "is Odilon Barrot. Scarcely had I informed those gentlemen of my orders to open the doors of Vincennes to them than he got upon a chair, and from the elevation of this improvised tribune exhorted them in the most violent terms to resist the arbitrary decision forced upon them." The General added: "Of course I allowed him to go on for a few minutes, but perceiving from the manner in which he began that the thing might last for an hour or so, I spoke in my turn. Addressing M. Odilon Barrot, I said to him, 'Monsieur Barrot, the time for speeches and protests is passed; you have made a great many for the last twenty years, and you perceive what it has brought you to. It is not my place to reply or to discuss. Will you go or not without protest or discussion?' If so, the doors are open to you; if not, I close them and apply for further instructions to the proper quarters.'"

A silence of a few minutes followed this categorical ultimatum. Every eye was turned upon

M. Odilon Barrot, who had arrogated to himself the presidentship and the direction of his colleagues' conduct. He considered his eighteen years of errors under the Government of July as constituting titles to infallibility, and dogmatically dictated the resolutions to be taken. To the few words of General de Courtigis the orator-prisoner replied solemnly : "The arrested members protest against the new attempt against their persons ; they will only yield to force to make them leave the prison and to resume their liberty."

Almost the same scene had been enacted at Mont Valérien. As General de Courtigis had justly observed, the time for speeches and protests had gone by ; I bethought myself of a very simple device to cut short all discussion. I procured the number of carriages necessary for the conveyance of all those ex-members who had persisted in remaining at Vincennes and Mont Valérien. Once the carriages arrived, the ex-members took their seats and were taken to their domiciles or bidden to alight at the spot where the carriage stopped.

Hence all that remained in the Paris prisons of the so-called political prisoners were the ex-members of the Mountain who had been arrested, some as a matter of precaution, the majority for their active share in the insurrection ; furthermore, the members of the secret societies ; and finally,

the individuals taken at the barricades and in the seditious gatherings.

But there still remained at large a considerable number of dangerous persons who were watching their opportunity to give a fresh signal for insurrection. Consequently the vigilance of the Prefecture of Police did not relax, and the arrests continued. They led to important discoveries, seizures of arms of all kinds, rifles, pistols, hand-shells, daggers, and quantities of ammunition. They also placed in our hands documents precious to the furtherance of justice, for they established the guilt of the arrested insurgents and provided us with a clue to their accomplices.

From the date of the 5th December Paris resumed its ordinary aspect and business its ordinary course. The stock exchange, the thermometer of public confidence, hailed the success of the *Coup d'État* with a rise of five francs in two days in the public funds. People breathed at last, and felt glad; many of those who, from force of circumstances, had protested against events, blessed from the bottom of their hearts the beneficent solution which guaranteed France a lasting stability—as lasting, at least, as wisdom and reason themselves were capable of being in a country so fundamentally shaken by the revolution.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE JACQUERIE IN THE PROVINCES.

The Insurrection in the Departments.—Troubles in the Department of the Allier.—Taking of La Palisse.—Assassination of the Gendarmes—Pillage and Orgies at Poligny.—The Occupation of and Assassinations at Clamecy.—Insurrection in the Departments of the Gers and the Hérault.—Massacre of the Gendarmes.—The Var and the Lower Alps.—Robbery and Rapine by the Insurgents—The Strength of Demagogy at the 2nd December, what it would have been in 1852.—The real Aim of the Anarchists.—Their Appetites and their Passions.—The Duty of Louis Napoleon and how he understood it.

ENERGETIC as was the resistance of the revolutionaries during the 3rd and 4th of December in Paris, it was but a mild specimen of the conflict they prepared to engage in in 1852 for the triumph of their abominable doctrines. The 2nd December had surprised them in their preparations; their stock of arms and ammunition was far from being complete; their numbers were not filled up, the exiles that were to fill the gaps could not be warned in time; the recruiting, which above all could only be the work of the eleventh hour, had not been carried out on a sufficiently large scale; and amidst the general commotion, the chiefs of



the secret societies had only succeeded in getting a small part of their adherents together. Still we had seen enough of it to enable us to judge of the perils the cause of order would have been exposed to from a properly organised demagogical army, disciplined and at its full strength; as it would not have failed to be, if recruited several months in advance, for the fixed term of 1852.

In the provinces as well as in Paris the 2nd December surprised the demagogues while they were still preparing. The *Coup d'État* had been so much talked about for the last twelve months without showing the least sign of reality that they had ceased to believe in it, and everywhere they imagined the struggle fixed for its constitutional date in the month of May, 1852. Nevertheless what strength, what anarchical passions, what abominable designs did not they reveal when taken unawares? If a terrible massacre did not devastate France on the 2nd December it is again our valiant army and our steadfast administrators and magistrates that we have to thank for it. Yet it is heart-rending to contemplate the cruel and bloody trials several of our departments suffered notwithstanding. There were still many sanguinary and ferocious acts to deplore; there was still a long period of deep mourning in many respectable families;

there were still too many poignant sorrows to remember for a country that respects herself.

At the first news of events, the demagogues in every part of the provinces understood but too well that the date of the uprising of 1852 had been fatally advanced, that Paris would spring to arms, and that it was their duty to second its efforts by a general insurrection. There where the revolutionary element was the most violent the taking to arms was immediate. A few more days were necessary to other departments, whose organisation was not so forward to begin the movement ; but on many points the delay in the preparing for the struggle fortunately lasted till the day of the absolute defeat of the insurrection in Paris. The discouragement produced by it caused the project to be abandoned. Hence those privileged counties escaped the sore trials of a civil war.

The large towns were strongly occupied by the troops, but though the agitation was very violent, the revolt went no further than menace. Lyons, Marseilles, Bordeaux, Nantes, Toulouse, all had their seditious gatherings. A few isolated shots were fired on the officers and the troops, but there was no battle, and it is to this comparatively pacific attitude of the great centres that we must attribute the refusal of certain populations to listen

to the voices of the agitators and the recruiting agents of the insurrection.

In a few departments the ground had been so carefully prepared that the uprising was immediate. The rebels were enabled to surprise the authorities, possess themselves of several towns, establish themselves without opposition, and inaugurate the reign of the most execrable terror for a few days. Robbery, pillage, assassination, rape, arson, nothing was wanting to this mournful exhibition of the programme of 1852. It was thus in the departments of the Allier, the Nièvre, the Cher, the Yonne, the Jura, the Gers, the Lot-et-Garonne, the Hérault, the Var, the Drôme, the Upper and Lower Alps, without mentioning other departments where, though less violent, the revolutionary saturnalia left nevertheless its bloody imprint.

The elements of the summary narrative we are about to give have been borrowed from the most authentic sources. We had before us for each department the reports of the *procureurs-généraux*, of the prefects, and of the gendarmerie. There is an absolute and melancholy concord between them. It would require more than a volume to record the atrocities committed. The plan we have proposed ourselves does not admit of such extensive details, hence we only offer an analysis ; but it will suffice

to give a just idea of the hatred and ferocious passions that animated the foes of society and to point out once more the perils from which the 2nd December saved France.

The department of the Allier was one of the most violently undermined by the socialistic propaganda. At the first news of the events in Paris, on the morning of the 3rd, bands of insurgents, armed with rifles, pistols, scythes, pitchforks, pikes, and daggers, had assembled in most of the cantons. They moved upon Moulins, Gannat, La Palisse, and Montluçon. Women and children provided with baskets and bags intended to collect the loot followed in their wake.

La Palisse had the mournful privilege of being the first point occupied by the insurrection. A column of downright bandits had formed itself at Donjon. As a prelude to its exploits it had arrested the mayor, M. de la Boutresse, a most worthy citizen, the justice of the peace, and a few notable inhabitants. They had been dragged from their beds and thrown half naked into a cart, which on this icy winter's morning was to take them to the prison of La Palisse.

At its arrival at La Palisse the band found, to defend its entrance, the sub-prefect, M. de Rochefort, and a few gendarmes, but it immediately opened

a murderous fire, and those brave champions of order were compelled to fall back upon the sub-prefecture after having left several men on the ground. Scarcely had they reached there when they were joined by the insurgents, who seized upon the sub-prefect and subjected him to the most cruel treatment. A new conflict ensued, and several gendarmes, besides their lieutenant and the quartermaster, fell mortally wounded.

The unfortunate quartermaster was riddled with shot, but he breathed still. The chief of the band, a notary, gave his fellow brutes the signal to finish him. He lodged in the chest first, in the head afterwards, several pistol bullets, and the victim was dispatched at last with the butt end of a rifle and stoned besides. The same method was repeated with a gendarme fallen by his side ; the bodies were dragged about and left to the women, who pierced them with pitchforks and daggers, after which the whole of the band joined in a merry dance round the bodies to the tune of the ditties of our most evil days, and the shouts of *Vive la guillotine ! Vive la République ! Down with the priests ! Down with the tyrant ! Death to the traitors !* By the latter were meant the honest folk. The band spread through the town to rob, to pillage, to gorge itself with any and everything ; the sacking of the place had just

een resolved upon when a squadron of cavalry, irected on the first news of the dangers that threa- ened the town, presented itself at the gates. Of ourse there was an immediate stampede of the ursorgents, who fled in all directions into the coun- y, abandoning their spoil and their prisoners, also aving as an evidence of their passage their ill- ted victims on the battle-ground.

At other points of the department columns of mobile gendarmerie and guards succeeded in dis- ersing the bands, and with the exception of a few skirmishes order was restored during the day of e 7th. But four days of hand-to-hand struggle ith the jacquerie, such was the balance of the epartment of the Allier.

In the Jura things assumed a more atrocious haracter. Poligny was fated to acquire a terrible elebrity in the history of this mournful epoch. In e night between the 3rd and 4th the tocsin rang n all the communes in the neighbourhood of oligny. The plan, settled long ago in expecta- on of a favourable opportunity, was to get posses- ion of this small borough, to make it into a centre or action, and to move afterwards on the county own of the department.

The programme was strictly carried out. The ursorgents succeeded in occupying Poligny; the

sub-prefect, the mayor, and other functionaries besides were arrested, insulted, struck, and taken to prison; after which a kind of provisional government was constituted, and barricades thrown up to resist a possible attack.

Once the unfortunate town in the power of these savages, a series of repulsive atrocities followed as a matter of course. Less blood was shed, perhaps, than at La Palisse, but to make up, as it were, the most horrible infamy was indulged by the rebels. They plundered methodically, public and private moneys were laid hold of, they robbed, they glutted themselves with food and drink, they tortured and killed, they outraged women, and caused such horror and mourning among respectable families as compared with which the loss of life is a blessing. To shame those fiends—if shame they could feel—and to edify those blind republicans who, under the pretext of serving the cause of liberty, are nothing but the unconscious auxiliaries of the revolution, we ought to give the horrible picture of the monstrous deeds committed during those two days at Poligny. But such things cannot be offered to the reader; besides, in recalling them, we should reawaken the sorrow of those families who were the victims. The authors of those crimes are in this way, and unfortunately, shielded by the very enormity of

their deeds against the indignation a narrative like that would produce.

After two mortal days the troops could at last get into Poligny; but the fiends cared more for their spoil than for their power. This power they did not defend; but their spoil they carried with them, some to their own homes, others into Switzerland, to thus elude more surely the pursuit of the law.

In the departments of the Cher, the Ain, and the Yonne, the same uprising of the revolutionary hordes, the same atrocities. Here it is a worthy octogenarian who falls, riddled with bullets, for having attempted to protect his commune; there it is a priest, struck down, mutilated, gashed to death, for having dared to speak of peace to these savages. Everywhere it is robbery, pillage; and always the same crimes provoked by the same appetites.

In this mid-France of which we have just spoken, one ill-fated town was to be distinguished even among the most afflicted. It was Clamecy. A few men often suffice to throw perturbation and depravation into a whole county. Clamecy had the mournful privilege of possessing some such bold scoundrels. They had recruited many credulous rustics by dazzling them with the stereotyped benefits of insurrection—the division of the pro-



perty of the wealthy—and, as a first instalment, the pillage of the public buildings and of the private ones at which a rich spoil might be expected. Thanks to these guilty promises, the demagogical organisers had recruited in the town, and above all in the communes of the arrondissements, a downright legion ready to obey their orders and to take up arms for the triumph of their hopes. At the first news of the insurrection in Paris the signal was given from Clamecy; the tocsin sounded in nearly every commune of the neighbourhood; the recruits sprang to arms, and coerced the working men by material force to enter their ranks. The women stimulated the ardour of the men. They distributed arms and ammunition, and, above all, prepared bags, baskets, and vehicles of all kinds to convey back to their homes their share of the plunder.

In the one night between the 5th and 6th of December four thousand rebels were marching on Clamecy, and a few hours later the town was in their hands. They constructed in hot haste at the entrance of the place barricades to protect themselves against an expected attack of the troops. Once this first precaution taken, they moved upon the *mairie* and the barracks, which they invested.

Resistance to such a number of assailants had

become impossible to the men of order. The *mairie* was occupied, and the barracks taken by assault. An unfortunate gendarme named Bidaut was tortured to death with the utmost refinement of cruelty. They wished to enjoy the spectacle of his agony; they dragged his mutilated body through the streets, they assailed him with the butt end of their rifles, only ceasing at intervals in order to prolong his martyrdom and to shout the most horrible blasphemies into his ears; but business called them elsewhere, so they made an end of him at last by battering his head to pieces with paving-stones.

Another gendarme was also murdered. A school-master by the name of Mugnier met with the same fate. M. Mulon, a lawyer, was crossing a street where a group of insurgents disported themselves; he was not known to any of them, but his clothes showed the class of society to which he belonged; he was a *bourgeois*, to use the language of the brigands; they had sworn death to his tribe, and to try their hands they killed M. Mulon.

If in those repulsive orgies that which represents authority, that which, middle class or noble, is called wealth, is mercilessly struck at, that which symbolizes religion has still a greater faculty of attracting the fury of the revolutionaries. It is

not enough for them to overthrow emperors and kings, they dare strike at God himself; they break His image, they profane His temples, they outrage His ministers, they most cruelly persecute those worthy men, those saint-like women who devote their lives to the education of the young and the care of the sick.

After all it is only logical this letting loose of revolutionary passion against everything and everybody which distantly or near is connected with religion. The principles the latter teach, the only ones by whose aid a nation may be regenerated, are they not the most formidable enemy whom they have to confront? However far they may keep from it, the religious idea still succeeds in getting at such shreds of conscience as they have still left; it gives this conscience, unbeknown to their owners, a secret warning of their impotency, and their rage increases in proportion to the fruitlessness of their efforts. Those impious wretches may for a moment by their culpable promises mislead credulous populations, but one does not insult the altar with impunity; the Church is not at its first proof, as, Heaven be thanked, it is not at its last victories, and we shall still behold—they know it, and it angers them—truth regain its empire and lead across the ages society, so cruelly tried by

momentary convulsions, to days of peace and redemption. Whether they like or not, their protests and declamation, their blasphemies and outrages notwithstanding, God will mark the term of the punishment He deems it wise to inflict upon nations in the guise of the sway of those barbarians. That day, vanquished and despised, they shall go back to the chaos of their past, bequeathing to humanity the memory of their misdeeds and their crimes as a warning to prevent their return for many years to come.

In every county occupied by the revolt the priests were in danger of their lives. Not far from Clamecy the worthy vicar of Neuvy, the Abbé Vilain, was on returning from mass surrounded by an armed mob. He was insulted and violently pushed and jostled as far as the presbytery. "Thou hast arms hidden there, we must have those arms," they cry to him. "Behold, these are my only arms, I have no others," says the worthy priest, showing them a crucifix. The reply exasperates the desperadoes; they lay hold of and brutally take him to prison; they put a pistol to his side, the bullet traverses the body, and he is left for dead on the spot. But Providence wished the venerable priest to survive his martyrdom. A few weeks after this abominable scene he was restored to his flock

amidst whom he had lived for twenty-six years, surrounded by esteem and devotion. The Cross of the Legion of Honour was bestowed upon him as a reward for the courage he had displayed.

At Bonny, the vicar, dragged from his home, was maltreated, struck, and taken to prison by a band of insurgents. At the head of the mournful procession marched a young woman brandishing a sabre and a flag, and shouting, "Death to the Vicar!"

At Clamecy a priest suffered the most cruel outrages; he escaped death by a miracle.

If in this ill-fated borough of Clamecy some took to killing and maiming inoffensive and peaceable inhabitants, others took to robbery. They repaired to the receiver of contributions and laid hands on the departmental chest, and were proceeding to the pillage of such houses as had been marked with red ink beforehand, and to the execution of those who figured on the list of the directing committee; but the alarm spreads, the troops arrive, they are already camped in view of Clamecy; the insurgents are compelled to abandon their prey to rush to the barricades, but they only go there to get a sight of the enemy and to make off as fast as they can. Thanks to this prudent flight they escaped their merited fate with the exception of five, who fall mortally wounded, their backs pierced by bullets.

A few moments afterwards Clamecy, occupied by our soldiers, is restored to peace; the insurgents have fled in all directions, leaving behind their spoil, their papers, the list of houses to be pillaged and of honest people to murder—in one word, the detailed plan of the misdeeds they had no time to put into execution.

The 9th December the days of trial to Clamecy terminated by a most impressive ceremony. Almost the whole of the town accompanied to their last resting place the two murdered gendarmes. M. Corbin, procureur-general and former Minister of Justice, had made it his duty to honour by his presence those two victims of their feeling of honour and devotion to their country. On their graves he pronounced those memorable words, which are as it were the summary of the horrible episode in the department of the Nièvre.

“Officers, soldiers of all arms, and all of you gentlemen, which of you would willingly hide his emotion in presence of those two open graves?”

“Here lie two heroes, who both died for the sacred cause of order and society. They died for you, inhabitants of Clamecy, basely assassinated by the hordes of demagoguery.

“For two nights and two days demagoguery was

mistress of this town. . . . The populace in revolt, houses forced, invaded, and pillaged, terror possessing itself of every honest heart, eight murders and close upon twenty victims, the most hideous saturnalia, sacking, and murder. Those are their works, such as they promised us for 1852.

“And without the 2nd December, without the patriotic devotion of Napoleon, who would doubt that the demagogues would have kept their word.

“But they reckoned without you, you our heroic army, which but a few days since shed your blood in Paris, and still arrived in time deep down into our provinces. They counted without you, valiant gendarmerie, the select body at all times, the type of devotion and of true courage! . . . And now, gentlemen, let us unite in one supreme tribute to those glorious martyrs. Honour to you, Cleret, honour to you, Bidaut! In the name of the magistracy, in the name of your comrades of all arms, in the name of all honest citizens, honour to you.

“The country will not forget her debt to your families, and justice will soon have its course.”

Like the centre of France, the south had to sustain cruel trials also. In the department of the Gers the insurrection assumed formidable proportions. They were not only disorderly bands of

plunderers and assassins, it was a downright army, comparatively well disciplined, and led by energetic men. More than four thousand rebels marched upon Auch, no less than six thousand possessed themselves of Mirande, and several thousands took the direction of Fleurance and other localities. But fortunately the military forces were closer at hand in the department of the Gers; the punishment was swift and the excesses of shorter duration.

There, as in the Jura, the Nièvre, and the Allier, the authorities had shown as much devotion as courage. M. de Magnitot, the prefect of the Gers, faced the fire of the insurgents side by side with Colonel de Cognord, whose cool courage and ability saved the town of Auch and preserved the department.

The sub-prefect of Lectoure, M. Lacoste, boldly confronted the rebels, and in spite of their menaces refused to submit to their will. After several days of battle and strife the department was restored to order. The troops counted a number of victims; the insurgents also suffered severe losses, without reckoning those who, taken with their arms upon them, had been handed over to the authorities.

In the department of the Hérault a similar uprising. Beziers was its principal scene. The 3rd, at the first tidings from Paris, the pass-word



and instructions were sent to the neighbouring communes, and on the 4th, before daybreak, more than four thousand rebels invaded the town. The summons to disperse of the authority, supported by the military, was answered by a violent volley. The killed were numerous on both sides. The most impatient began to pillage, leaving the rest to fight. Without the firmness of the troops Beziers would have been set on fire and its inhabitants butchered without quarter. As it was the victims were many. The rebels killed for killing's sake. The most inoffensive passers-by were massacred, their only crime being their respectable appearance.

At Bédarieux the scenes of ferocity are more abominable still. The gendarmes are butchered; their barracks set on fire; children are killed; they even try to burn one alive; he succeeds in escaping from the flames, but is thrown back; and the so-called patriotic songs, the cries of "*Vive la République*," accompany those horrible butcheries.

The small burgh of Capestang shares the same fate. It is in the hands of the insurgents, and the unfortunate gendarmes who try to prevent the sacking of it are struck down by the bullets of the assassins. From one end of the department to the

other the desperadoes lift the standard of terror on high, and it wants the energy of General de Rostolan, who scours it in all directions at the head of his columns of mobile guards, to discourage the insurrection and to finally restore order and security.

Our summary of this horrible jacquerie would be incomplete if we did not devote a few lines to the ravages it accomplished in the departments of the Lower Alps and the Var.

The department of the Lower Alps forms as it were a kind of outskirts of Marseilles. It is in the latter town that the chiefs of the demagogical movement came to take their instructions, and these instructions, given long ago, were as follows: "To uprise at the first tidings of a revolt in Paris, to unite the bands, to lay hands upon the principal towns, and to move on Marseilles." Marseilles was designated, like Lyons, Toulouse, Limoges, and other large towns, as the centre of a provisional government. The day of the final triumph in Paris those governments would have been united into one.

At the first tidings received from Paris the whole of the department of the Lower Alps was in motion. The tocsin was rung in the villages, and in a few hours the insurgent columns, with their

arms upon them, mustered at the appointed spots. Their arms consisted, as elsewhere, of muskets, pistols, hatchets, sabres, scythes, pitchforks, and pikes, besides all the implements used by the agricultural labourer. Nor were the baskets and bags forgotten. It is those necessary adjuncts to rapine that ever betray the real nature of demagogical heroism.

At Forcalquier a watchmaker named Escoffier assumes the command of the insurrection. At Manosque the member for the council-general of the canton, citizen Buisson, places himself at the head of the bands.

The ball is opened at Forcalquier. The town is without troops and unable to defend itself. Two thousand rebels invade it, and range themselves in battle array in front of the sub-prefecture. The sub-prefect, M. Paillard, is summoned to surrender. He energetically resists, and protests against the violence offered to the representative of the Government. He stoutly and loudly orders the few gendarmes around him to resist, but he is immediately seized upon, a hundred muskets are levelled at his breast, and once more he is summoned to surrender.

“Kill me,” he replies, “but I’ll never betray my duty ; I shall not surrender.” A terrible commotion

ensues ; a stentorian cry of "To death " is heard ; but the chief, Escoffier, is moved by so great an instance of bravery , he dashes away the weapons that are about to vomit death, and succeeds for a moment in stopping his desperadoes.

The latter are loth, however, to abandon their prey. They fall upon M. Paillard, whom out of respect for their chief they do not kill ; but he is struck and injured, he is almost pounded to death by terrible blows with the butt end of rifles, his clothes are torn to shreds by bayonet thrusts, one of the latter cuts his leg through and through and the blood flows profusely. Still they overlook nothing ; to let him remain at Forcalquier is tantamount to giving him the chance of being rescued by the reaction, hence they'll take him to a village several miles away. Bruised, wounded, more dead than alive, he must march thither. He is dragged off, handcuffed and with a halter round his neck, between two rows of desperadoes, deliberating within his hearing upon the kind of torture they shall inflict on him. At night, on his arrival at some den transformed into a prison for the nonce, in the village of Encontres, M. Paillard, writhing with agony, falls senseless to the ground. Not to have succumbed to the tortures it had endured, the body must have been steeled like the heart. But far

from being cast down, his mind dwelt but upon one thing, how to aid the unfortunate people placed under his protection. After a few moments' rest he gathered his remaining strength and succeeded in escaping to go and seek assistance.

Almost at the same moment, Manosque, Sisteron, and other localities were equally occupied by the bands, and from the different points of the department a movement was made upon Digne, which being only defended by a few recruits, fell into the hands of the insurrection. At Digne, as at Sisteron, as at Forcalquier, as everywhere else, the first care of the insurgents was pillage. The public chest was naturally the most amply lined, hence the first to be despoiled.

A note communicated by the Minister of the Interior to the semi-official organs tells the manner in which the brave receiver-general of Digne, Viscount de Matharel, succeeded in saving part of the public moneys.

“At the approach of the insurgent bands who were marching on Digne,” says this note, “M. de Matharel had part of his funds (15,000 francs) removed to the barracks, and concealed on his person a similar sum in bank notes. The custodian of the barracks, which were only guarded by some

recruits of the 25th Light Infantry, was compelled, to avoid the disarmament of the latter, to make concessions to the leaders of the insurrection, and to hand over the moneys of the treasury, which they claimed in the name of seven thousand peasants armed to the teeth. A refusal would have necessarily led to enforced contributions, and probably to the pillage and burning of the town.

“The next morning, not satisfied with the funds found at the barracks, the insurgents repaired to the receiver-general’s to insist upon another 14,000 francs, which they said were wanted for the pay of the men.

“Happily M. de Matharel’s presence of mind did not forsake him. He resisted, and not only succeeded in baulking the insurrection of half of his funds, but also in saving the offices and archives of the inland revenue by remaining at his post to the end.”

During several days the whole of the department of the Lower Alps was in the hands of the insurrection, and it wanted nothing less than a regular campaign to regain possession of it. The insurgents, hemmed in on all sides, did not give up their prey without offering battle; they left a certain number of killed on the field. More than

eight hundred prisoners, among which were a great many chiefs, fell into the hands of our soldiers.

On the 11th Forcalquier was retaken. On the 12th Digne was relieved. But it was not until the 16th that the columns of mobiles succeeded in dislodging the desperadoes from all their positions. For twelve days the insurrection had occupied and terrorized this unfortunate department.

In the Var the same *ensemble* in the uprising, the same success of the insurgents during the first days, the same robberies, the same pillage, the same murders. At Cuers, where the gendarmes are massacred with refined cruelty, the body of one is cut in strips, and to the plaudits of his accomplices, one of the chiefs washes his hands in the reeking gore of the victim. There also the army restore order and chastise the criminals; forty insurgents are killed in one encounter, a greater number still are wounded; a great many arrests are made, and the troops succeed in seizing a large supply of arms and ammunition, besides some of the proceeds of those heroic citizens' pilferings.

In the departments of Vaucluse, the Gard, the Drôme, the Ardèche, and others, still the same atrocities are met with.

Assuredly we have dwelt long enough on those days of terror. But we only evoked these shameful

recollections to deduce from them two lessons of which no honest man will deny the value. The terrible scenes we have retraced show us both the real aim of the insurrection and the extent of its resources on the 2nd December, and by inference what the latter would have been in 1852.

Its resources! they are shown to us in the departments where the revolutionary organisation was most advanced. When departments, the most thinly populated of France, such as the Lower Alps, the Var, and the Gers, could start at the first signal more than fifteen thousand combatants, one may judge what this army of the *Jacquerie* would have been if at that date of the 2nd December the struggle had been prolonged for a few days, and a proportionate contingent had sprung to arms in every one of the provinces.

And if instead of a few days the rebels had had before them the six months that separated them from the fatal term of May, 1852, what terrible proportions might not their organisation have taken, what an immense network of fire and steel might not have held the whole of France captive.

As we have said, on the 2nd December the enlisting had scarcely begun, the stock of arms had not been completed, there was but a small store of



ammunitions, and very little money to encourage the uprising and pay the combatants.

As for the recruiting, it was made difficult by the constant vigilance of the authorities; it could only be accomplished slowly; the six months afforded by the prospect of 1852 were but barely sufficient for this compromising task.

With regard to arms and ammunition, they could not be stored in great quantities without the risk of seizure; on the other hand, to distribute them so long beforehand was to give the alarm and to expose both the giver and the receiver.

The money could be distributed even less in advance than the munitions. The character of the depositaries permits the suspicion that it would have served for any other purpose than for which it was intended; there would have remained but little of it at the moment it was wanted. Hence the money was still locked up, the arms and ammunition in foreign countries, in the hands of those who were to supply them.

But in 1852 the enlisting would have been complete, the contingents at their posts, the arms and ammunitions in their possession, the money distributed in the provinces as it had been done in Paris, and those terrible hordes of demagoguery, organised and disciplined, would have been ready to

offer battle to society and to accomplish the most execrable misdeeds on it. Instead of isolated engagements, which could only lead to partial results, we were threatened with a general uprising, having for its well-considered aim the occupation and subjection of the whole country. The army, instead of being able to concentrate on determined points as it had been on the 2nd December, would have been compelled to spread itself here, there, and everywhere. Instead of the success it had obtained a check would have been possible. Hence if the resources of the insurrection were sufficiently powerful on certain points on the 2nd December, it will not be denied that in 1852 they would have been a hundredfold more formidable.

And the aim of the insurrection, what was it? Its aim would not have changed. It would have been the same in 1852 that it was on the 2nd December. We have seen this aim in all its naked truth, in its undisguised cynicism.

It would be gratuitously idealising the *Jacquerie* of 1851 to invest it with a political motive. It did not aim at changing the form of government, because it was agreed at any rate that we should continue the Republic; it did not even meditate the substitution of one doctrine for another, for the masses could not have been excited by similar

subtleties. One could only incite them by an appeal to their passions and appetites, and this the leaders exclusively strove to do.

Their passions—hatred of the rich, the priest, the gendarme, authority: because the rich possessed what they coveted; because the priest taught religion and morality, the only checks upon social perversion; because the gendarme represented the protection of honest people and property; because the authority was the vigilant watchman of a beneficent power. It is because of this that the rich were arrested and killed, the priests outraged and murdered, the gendarmes butchered and massacred, and that everywhere the magistrates, the depositaries of authority, were fallen upon, insulted, and imprisoned, and rewarded for their courage and fidelity with torture and insult.

Their appetites—the possession of that which belonged to others; and everything being fish that came to their nets, above all, money, they plundered the public chests. What was portable was taken away, wine and spirits especially, though only after having glutted themselves with them on the spot. Their appetites were robbery and pillage; this is why the women and children came in the wake of the combatants' columns with basket and bag.

Those acts of pillage, carefully premeditated,

supply the truest of all the definitions of the motives of the *Jacquerie* in 1851, as of that which was preparing for 1852.

And now let us point out the deductions from those facts.

Louis Napoleon, as Chief of the State, disposed of every means of information with regard to the real situation of the country. The prefects, the public prosecutors, the commanders of the *gendarmerie* had supplied a series of reports in which the plans and the doings of the demagogic party were minutely revealed. The substance of those reports was continually submitted to the Prince. Hence Louis Napoleon knew in their utmost details what were the projects of the demagogues, their present forces, and their possible resources in the future, their aims, and the execrable means by which they would try to attain them.

What duties did the certain knowledge of such formidable perils impose upon the Chief of the State? Was he to stop at the repressive action of the law? But the *Jacquerie* was the hydra with a thousand heads. It is not by ordinary means that similar enterprises can be checked. To simply continue this inefficient pursuit of an obstinate foe was to march unconcernedly to the brink of the precipice which in 1852 would have engulfed the

Chief of the State, the Government, and society itself. Was it with such culpable neglect that Louis Napoleon could requite the confidence of the country which on the 10th December had thrown herself in his arms thinking to find a saviour? Did there exist a sufficiently powerful consideration to divert him from the accomplishment of the mission he held from the whole of France. The intrigues of parties, their artful machinations to paralyze the action of the Chief of the State, and to thus tide over the interval that separated them from the cataclysm of 1852 with the hope of profiting by it, the ingenious obstructions accumulated with the intention of staving off all pacific and constitutional solution, were those the considerations to which to submit, and could they weigh in the balance against the immense interests Louis Napoleon had undertaken to defend?

Louis Napoleon looked higher: he beheld France crestfallen, threatened by an act of abominable vandalism, and, listening to both the promptings of his heart and his reason, he felt within himself the power and the will to save the country. He made the *Coup d'État*, and the country was saved.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### FOUR MONTHS OF DICTATORSHIP.

The Poll of the 21st December.—How Louis Napoleon used his omnipotence.—The Constitution of 1852.—Attitude of M. de Morny towards the Prince and his own Colleagues.—His Hostility against the Prefect of Police —Withdrawal of the Minister of the Interior.—The Cabinet disorganised.—The New Ministry of the General Police.—Letter of the Prince-President on the Subject.—Senate and Council of State.—The Decrees relating to the Property of the Orleans Family.—The Decree on the Press.—The Truth with regard to the Press Laws.—Decree on the Council of State and the Legislative Body.—The Rôle reserved to the Senate.—Convocation of the Electoral Colleges —The Official Candidature.—Difficulties about the Presidency of the Legislative Body.—What the Dictatorship of Louis Napoleon has been to France.

To secure for this great work of the 2nd December its complete result, to give stability to its effects, two forces were necessary : those of the Prince and of the country. We have noticed the way in which the Prince had understood the duty imposed upon him by circumstances, we shall see how the country understood hers.

The people were convoked in their constituencies on the 20th and 21st December. They were to say whether they approved or condemned the initiative of Louis Napoleon, whether they accepted or rejected

the programme of government submitted to them by the proclamation of the 2nd December.

The voting of the 21st December was a downright national rejoicing; each elector contributed his share and gaily went to the poll to deposit the voting paper which would insure his deliverance. The houses were decked with flags, joy and confidence might be read on every one's countenance. The counting of the poll became a mere formality, so well was the splendid result known beforehand. This result still exceeded all hopes, all expectations. The following are its exact figures:—

Votes	.	.	.	.	.	.	8,116,773
Ayes	.	.	.	.	.	.	7,439,216
Noes	.	.	.	.	.	.	640,733

In this number of 640,000 unfavourable votes figured the Legitimist Intransigents, respectable from the very tenacity of their convictions, the militant Orleanists, and some faithful Republicans; but the preponderating element was made up of the insurrectionary forces—from which, however, we must deduct those who were under lock and key and those who had judged it prudent to cross the frontier; finally, those who having been in hot water before, either for theft, bankruptcy, arson, and sundry other demagogic amenities, were debarred from their civil and political rights.

On the 31st December the revising committee brought to the Elysée the result of the plébiscite, the statement of the votes given. In his reply to the speech of M. Baroche, the Prince uttered those memorable words: "France has responded to the loyal appeal I made to her. She has understood that if I waived legality for a moment, it was to enter within the bounds of the law immediately afterwards. . . ."

Those words supplied the key to the great event France and Europe had been watching. This was the upshot of the obstinate struggle of the majority of the Assembly against the Prince, of the blind resistance of this majority to the oft-reiterated wishes of the country.

We might stop here, for here the events indicated by the title of this book come to an end.

The presidency which Louis Napoleon held by virtue of the election of the 10th December is about to undergo fundamental transformations. We shall successively have the dictatorial presidency, the decennial presidency, which we might term the primitive form of the empire. Without attempting at present the complete history of the two new forms of the power of Louis Napoleon which brought him to the empire, we cannot alto-



gether pass them over without glancing at them, and without noticing the principal events that swayed them. In recalling the concatenation of circumstances that compelled the 2nd December, and in describing its most exciting episodes, we have at the same time shown its consequences and the solid basis it formed for the foundation of a new régime.

If the 2nd December had given Louis Napoleon as great an authority as that wielded by the most powerful sovereigns, it had, however, not made an emperor of him, and this to part of the nation was a matter of deep regret. The 21st December the seven millions of votes that acclaimed Louis Napoleon would, with few exceptions, have restored the Empire;\* but the Prince thought himself bound not to turn the act he had just accomplished to the detriment of the Republican form; he wished to leave it its disinterested character, he wished to save the country from the vandalism with which she was threatened, and to restore to her the unfettered disposal of her destinies. This he deemed sufficient for his reward and for his glory. In

\* Our assumption is amply justified by the vote of the 22nd November, 1852. At that date, we shall see in fact the Empire restored by 7,824,189 suffrages, viz by 384,913 more votes than Louis Napoleon had obtained on the 21st December for the decennial presidency.

the matter of power Louis Napoleon had only demanded so much as would enable him to replace bastard, illogical, and perilous institutions by institutions that would ensure stability and contribute to the revival of prosperity; he had obstinately refused to profit by his omnipotence to change into a sovereign crown the title of president, of the first magistrate of the Republic.

Anxious to accomplish his task, the Prince had immediately set to work to evolve from the 2nd December all that he had promised and all that the nation expected. The drawing up of the Constitution, the preparation of the fundamental laws, the examination of questions relating to persons, the composition of the great bodies of the State, all this was driven abreast, and the country would have but to wait a short time.

In fact, on the 14th January appeared the most essential manifestation of the powers given to Louis Napoleon. He promulgated the Constitution.

In this Constitution of the 14th January, 1852, might be found the whole of the programme Louis Napoleon had expounded to us at St. Cloud a few weeks previous to the 2nd December. The Constitution of the year VIII. served as a basis to that of 1852. The legislative power was exercised

collectively by the President of the Republic, the Senate, and the Legislative Body. A Council of State drew up the projected laws and supported their discussion before the Chamber. The Chief of the State was responsible; the Ministers were in a political sense only responsible to him. The Constitution was subject to revision, and the greater part of the attributes granted to the Executive under its present provisions might in the future be curtailed without commotion, by the natural working of institutions, in favour of the assemblies—whose rôle was very narrowly defined.

Nor was the country forgotten in this redistribution of constitutional attributes; she elected the members of the Legislative Body, and re-established universal suffrage enabled every citizen in possession of his civil and political rights to participate in the action of the Government.

To say that this Constitution was the personal work of Louis Napoleon would be inexact, but he had inspired it. Some eminent jurists, and principally MM. Troplong, de Meynard and Rouher had been his useful co-workers.

The Constitution of 1852 incontestably answered to the needs of the time; and if some of its provisions were open to discussion, if the control of the Executive's acts was notably hedged round by

precautions that made its practice difficult, criticism was to a great extent disarmed by this essential and provident clause of "revision." The revision in fact permitted, by a mechanism most easily set in motion, the introduction to the fundamental pact of such improvements as time and experience would have demonstrated to be useful.

The reception accorded to the Constitution was upon the whole favourable. The intelligent part of the nation having weighed all circumstances, saw in it a prudent equilibrium between the principles of authority and public liberty. The eagerness of Louis Napoleon to lay down his dictatorship could not fail to be regarded by the country as an evidence of his moderation and of his reserve in using the power which events had invested with such considerable proportions at his hands.

As we have said, those grave constitutional questions were not the only ones that claimed the Prince's attention in the first moments of his new power. The question of persons assumed a large part in his preoccupations. He had to consider the formation of the Senate and the Council of State and the reconstruction of the Ministry, a measure necessary according to his opinion.

The reconstruction of the Ministry had, in fact,

from various causes become inevitable. M. de Morny assumed towards the Prince a manner which offended his susceptibilities, and affected with some of his colleagues airs of superiority that only succeeded in hurting them. He wished to sway everything, without possessing by a long way the necessary qualities to so preponderating a rôle. Experience of affairs of State failed him absolutely, and he too often considered his personal interest before that of the public.\*

The Prince was still bent upon M. de Persigny taking a seat in his councils. M. de Morny energetically opposed the wish, and attempted at the same time to remove from the Cabinet those members whose confidence or sympathy he had not been able to win. Above all was he desirous of replacing the Prefect of Police, whose vigilance embarrassed and worried him. This was attempt-

\* M. Fould, who was endowed with rare faculties of penetration, had made up his mind that the presence of M. de Morny in the Council could not be prolonged. Though having a great affection for him, he foresaw that the nature of his relations with the Prince and with some of his colleagues must necessarily lead to a rupture. He had made himself the pivot, as it were, of a reconstructed cabinet, and communicated his intentions to me; he had even asked me to enter this new combination, and to support his projects at the Elysée. He offered the Prince to give M. de Persigny the portfolio of foreign affairs, and to create a new ministry, that of the general police, to which the Marquis de Turgot would be called.

ing too much at once, especially for one whose credit was on the wane. It will not be without interest to enter into some explanations on this last point. M. de Morny, who was engaged in numerous business speculations, attached great value to being informed on all things. Hence a Prefect of Police was a precious ally to him. He had easily established an intimacy with my predecessor, M. Carlier, and he wished the same state of things to continue. At my accession to the prefecture I had been the object of numerous advances on his part. Invitation upon invitation had been sent to me. From various causes I had judged it prudent not to accept them. A natural coolness had succeeded to this interested display of good feeling, and the former had been increased by certain dissensions that sprang up between us during the days of December. Shortly after those days, complying with a pressing request of the Prince, I had been compelled to signalise to him the vast profits realised at the Stock Exchange during those events by some great speculators *designated by himself*. M. de Morny got wind of my investigations, and from that moment his coolness manifestly increased. He had recourse to every means in order to alienate the confidence of the Chief of the State from me, but the enter-

prise was beset with danger, as he himself soon perceived. M. Carlier was his accomplice and his agent in this shady bit of business. The former Prefect of Police was charged by him to have me watched. My acts, my words, my every step were reported, commented on, and belied. Several reports had been handed to the Prince; they were given as the absolutely spontaneous expression of the criticism and complaints of one of my subordinates at the Prefecture of Police. This surveillance, or rather this system of espionage, had been revealed to me by a very devoted agent. I had informed the Prince of these doings, and noticed the unfavourable impression produced against the authors. It seemed to me not altogether out of place to furnish him one day with the material proofs of those intrigues. I was enabled to procure the very minutes of the reports addressed to the Prince. They were in the handwriting of M. Carlier; and to make the evidence more crushing still, one of them had been corrected by M. de Morny himself. Provided with those pieces, I had been to see the Minister of the Interior, and had reproached him with his want of confidence in his Prefect of Police. If people could but have heard the protestations against such a supposition with which my words were met! I waited till M.

de Morny had finished, then I took from my pocket-book the minutes of the reports, and particularly the one corrected by himself, and showed them to him. This of course put an end to our interview, and taking my leave I proceeded to the Elysée. I handed to the Chief of the State the draft copies of M. Carlier's reports and my resignation at the same time. I was bent upon giving the Chief of the State his full freedom of choosing, between two men whose presence in the same Government became henceforth impossible, the one who still commanded his confidence and sympathy. The mind of the Prince with regard to M. de Morny had been made up for some days. He did not even wait for the additional explanations I offered to submit to him to tell me his decision. "I had decided," he said to me, "to break with M. de Morny, I was to tell him so shortly, but this incident necessarily accelerates the solution. 'Take back your resignation and remain here.'"

In fact, when I left the Prince's room I remained in the adjacent one, talking to M. Mocquart. Half an hour later I beheld M. de Morny enter the Prince's room in his turn; he soon came out again, and then he was no longer Minister of the Interior. M. de Morny told M. Mocquart and myself that, fatigued and desirous of resuming his freedom to



attend to his own business, he had come to ask the Prince to find him a successor.

This incident happened on the 14th of January, at ten o'clock in the morning. We have given its summary narrative with the documents before us.

So that everything should be said on the first causes of M. de Morny's retirement, we must penetrate still further into his intimate relations with Louis Napoleon. M. de Morny was of opinion that after the 2nd December he was entitled to a reward of an exceptional nature. He expected to receive it immediately after the events; he indulged dreams that could scarcely be realised. Days went by and nothing came. His impatience took the shape of a visible discontent. He at last resolved to acquaint the Chief of the State with his pretensions; some were exaggerated, and others were misplaced. The latter were of such a nature as to absolutely debar me from entering into further details upon them.\* Those which the Prince had judged exaggerated were dragged from his good nature in the end by dint of worrying. M. de Morny was at first raised to the dignity of Grand Cross of

\* M. Granier de Cassagnac, in his "*Souvenirs du Second Empire*," gives some details as exact as interesting upon the pretensions of M. de Morny. He reveals the true cause of the very natural coolness of the Prince towards M. de Morny, a coolness from which the Prince never departed except to avoid incessant worrying.

the Legion of Honour, and received later on the title of Duke. But that he should have preferred his request for those two favours immediately after the 2nd December had irritated the Prince, and contributed to breed the liveliest desire to break with his Minister.

If we had still been under a parliamentary government it might have been said that the retreat of one member of the Government definitely reopened the ministerial crisis which for the last few days had been latent. The new régime did not admit of a ministerial crisis properly speaking. Reciprocal responsibility, the principle by which the grievance of one or the other Minister is forced upon them all, existed no longer. A Minister might retire without his colleagues being in duty bound to associate themselves with his fate. If they had done so, they would not only have protested against, but nullified the institutions of which they were the foremost representatives. M. de Morny's withdrawal—his resignation as he chose to call it—would therefore have left the entire Ministry at its post, if other causes had not thrown in its midst more deep-rooted germs of dislocation.

In fact, but few days after the resignation of M. de Morny—whom the Prince had not deemed it necessary to replace immediately, seeing that he

contemplated an imminent reconstruction of the Cabinet—the rumour spread that the President proposed to restore to the State, by a simple decree, such of the property of the Orleans family as had lapsed to it as inheritance from King Louis Philippe I. Several of the Ministers loudly blamed this resolution. They considered it an impolitic and unjust act. They entertained towards the house of Orleans feelings of sympathy which did not seem to permit to them a complicity, however indirect, in this measure.

And in saying indirect, we consecrate the doctrine of the non-reciprocity of responsibility of the Ministers. The responsibility of the measure would only devolve upon the Minister who signed the decree. The other members of the Cabinet might blame the resolution of the Prince, they might contest and oppose it to the last hour, they might even endeavour after its accomplishment to lessen its effects, but to protest by a collective resignation would have been, we repeat, an inopportune reminiscence of the parliamentary past, it would have been substituting the ancient doctrine of the responsibility of Ministers for the provisions of paragraph 2 of the constitutional bases consecrated by the plébiscite of the 21st December, 1851.

The men who, as it were, had sucked parliamen-

tary institutions with their mothers' milk could not easily reconcile themselves to this new doctrine. The announcement by the Prince to his Ministers of his decision with regard to the estates of the Orleans family provoked this time a downright crisis. Those who blamed the measure, and did not deem themselves justified to bear a share in it by reason of their antecedents, told the Prince of their wish to withdraw. Those who without approving the decree did not deem themselves linked by a reciprocity of responsibility with the Minister who was to countersign and assume the responsibility of it, did not tender their resignation. Hence the Cabinet found itself divided into two camps. Three Ministers withdrew—MM. Fould, Rouher, and Magne; five—MM. Marquis de Turgot, Ducos, General de Saint-Arnaud, Fourtoul, and Lefèvre-Durufié—consented at the repeated request of the Prince to remain at their posts, while condemning the resolution.

To M. de Morny this ministerial crisis had been a coincidence favourable to his vanity. Instead of retiring from the Ministry alone, he drowned his withdrawal in that of his colleagues; and the Prince having divulged his interview of the 14th January with M. de Morny to no one, the latter did not fail to say that, like his colleagues, he

withdrew on the question of the Orleans property. This error, of small importance assuredly, has become the version most generally accepted.\* Let us add, however, that M. de Morny blamed the decrees relating to the Orleans family, and that an explanation on the subject had taken place between himself and the Prince.

On the 16th January the Prince, without having spoken of it to any one save to MM. de Saint-Arnaud, de Persigny, and to me, had decided upon the following combination. MM. de Casabianca at the Ministry of State; de Saint-Arnaud, War; de Persigny, Foreign Affairs; de Maupas, Interior; Marquis de Turgot, General Police; Marquis d'Audiffret, Finances; Ducos, Marine; Fourtoul, Public Education; Lefèvre-Durufié, Agriculture, Commerce, and Public Works.

This combination was in part known to the political world, and surprise was felt as day after

\* MM. Granier de Cassagnac and Paul de Cassagnac, in their '*Histoire populaire de l'Empereur Napoléon III*' (vol. 1. p 369), speak of the ministerial crisis caused by what is termed the decree on the Orleans property. They point out those of the Ministers who retired on this question, and with regard to M. de Morny they add.—"M. de Morny, Minister of the Interior, equally withdrew, but from motives other than these, though the contrary has been stated. His substitution had been decided on several days before the decrees." On this, as well as on all other circumstances, MM. de Cassagnac were very accurately informed.

day passed without it appearing in the *Moniteur*. Various causes prevented this appearance. M. Ducos insisted upon retiring. The Prince was equally anxious to retain the valuable services of this eminent man. The Marquis de Turgot only consented to remain in the Council on the condition of keeping his portfolio for Foreign Affairs, and the Marquis d'Audiffret imposed conditions which the Prince would not accept. To remove these difficulties a few days had been necessary. The understanding was at last complete. M. Persigny abandoned, though not without some show of temper, the portfolio of Foreign Affairs, and he obtained that of the Interior instead. The Ministry of General Police was then offered to me, and I did not think it right to refuse the Prince this sacrifice of my preferences for the portfolio of the Interior. As for M. d'Audiffret it was impossible to overcome his resistance, and M. Bineau was selected for the portfolio of Finances. The *Moniteur* of the 22nd January published the decree of the nomination of the new Ministers. The Cabinet was composed as follows :—

MM. COUNT DE CASABIANCA, Minister of State.

ABBATUCCI, Minister of Justice and Public  
Worship.

MM. MARQUIS DE TURGOT, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

DE SAINT-ARNAUD, Minister for War.

DUCOS, Minister of Marine and the Colonies.

DE PERSIGNY, Minister of the Interior.

DE MAUPAS, Minister of General Police.

LEFÈVRE-DURUFLÉ, Minister of Public Works, of Agriculture and Commerce.

FOURTOUL, Minister of Public Education.

BINEAU, Minister of Finances.

Two new Ministries had been created, the Ministry of State and that of the General Police.

Were they necessary? The future has not completely proved it. We, MM. Abbatucci, Fould, and I, had combated this twofold innovation; but the Prince had a very natural reverence for all the institutions of the First Empire. Those two Ministries existed under Napoleon I. This was the principal cause of their re-establishment.

The functions of the Minister of State were determined in the following manner by the decree of the 22nd January:—

The communications of the Government with the State. The correspondence of the President with the various Ministers. The countersigning of the decrees nominating the Ministers, the Presidents of

the Senate and of the Legislative Body, nominating the Senators and the concessionaries of donations (pensioners on the civil list, nominating the members of the Council of State. The countersigning of the decrees of the President in conformity with the articles 24, 28, 31, 46, and 54 of the Constitution, and of those concerning matters not especially within the attributes of another special ministerial department. The editing and recording of the minutes of the Council of Ministers. The administration of the national domains and manufactories.

As for the Ministry of General Police, the Prince attached an altogether special importance to it; he considered it one of the essential mechanisms of his Government; and to make this understood he had wished to define this mechanism himself. He did so in a letter addressed to me on the 30th January. This letter was a veritable programme. It will not be without interest therefore to recall it here.\*

“MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE,

“At the moment when you are about to organise the Ministry of the General Police, I wish to imbue you with the dominant idea that caused me to judge this organisation necessary, so that henceforth you

\* *Moniteur Universel* of the 31st January, 1852.



may be impressed with the spirit in which it should be carried out.

“At present, though responsible, the President of the Republic can only gain an imperfect knowledge of the general state of the country by the means at his disposal. He ignores how the various mechanisms of the administration work, whether the measures decided upon with his Ministers are executed in accordance with the spirit that dictated them, if public opinion approves or disapproves of the acts of his Government. Finally he ignores the abuses to suppress, the omissions to provide against, the indispensable improvements to introduce. In fact to enlighten him he has only the information, often contradictory, always insufficient, of the various Ministers.

“The administrations of War and of Finances have a control; the Ministry of the Interior, which is the only political one, has none. When an order is transmitted to a prefect, we have to take the word of this prefect himself as to whether its execution has been what it should be. Suppose that conflicts should arise between the different authorities, how are we to determine, from information incomplete and necessarily one-sided, who is in the right? How are we to reprimand or to reward with any degree of justice?

“On the other side, surveillance being too localised, enclosed within too narrow a sphere, exercised by agents independent of one another and without direct communication with the central power, crime and conspiracy cannot be prevented or suppressed in an efficient manner.

“In the actual state of things there exists no organisation that can clearly and with dispatch report upon the condition of public opinion, because there is no organisation which possesses this exclusive mission, which disposes of means to carry it out, which, standing outside all political questions, has the power to be impartial, to speak the truth and to transmit it. To supply this shortcoming we must revive the decree of the 21st Messidor of the year XII.; namely, remove from the Ministry of the Interior, occupied with too many various matters, the direction of the general police, and give it a simple and uniform organisation obeying one single impulse.

“To this effect it will be sufficient to create seven or eight general inspectors, whose respective functions will extend to several military divisions, and who will correspond directly with the Minister. They will have under them special inspectors who themselves will be in constant communication with the commissaries of towns, who at present, scattered

as they are over the whole of France, are nothing but the agents of the municipalities. In this way the Minister of Police will be at the head of those functionaries hierarchically subordinated to one another, but who will none the less owe obedience to the civil authorities from the mayor to the prefect. The Minister will survey everything while administering nothing; he will not diminish the authority of the prefect, because he will not share it; his agents will support the various authorities, and enlighten first them, and the Government afterwards, on all that concerns the public service.

“No doubt in a condition of affairs only representing privileged interests a similar Ministry might inspire apprehensions; but under a Government whose mission it is to satisfy general interests it can have nothing but what is reassuring to every one.

“Hence this will not be a Ministry of provocation and persecution, endeavouring to meddle with family secrets, seeing harm everywhere for the pleasure of pointing it out, interfering with the relations of citizens between one another, and introducing suspicion and fear everywhere; it will, on the contrary, be an essentially protective institution, specially animated by a spirit of benevolence and moderation which does not exclude firmness;

it will only intimidate the enemies of society. To sum up : its rôle is to watch in the interests of humanity, of public security, of general utility, of the introduction of improvements, of the suppression of abuses, every part of the public service. In that way it will provide the Government with the means of doing good.

“It is to you, M. le Ministre, who gave me so many proofs of your discernment, of courage in critical moments, and of devotion, that I confide this noble and important mission to constantly inform me of the truth, which is too often intentionally kept from the knowledge of the supreme power.

“Pray accept, &c.,

“LOUIS NAPOLEON.”

If this last phrase, which alluded intentionally to the services I had been able to render during the difficult days of December, contained a flattering testimony, it had another aim besides ; it was intended as, and it was, a categorical answer to the attacks whose object I had been on the part of M. de Morny.

Reading this letter to me himself previous to sending it to the *Moniteur*, the Prince added words of lively gratitude and precious gratulations.

But is truth ever long in favour close to a throne? This mission so expressly confided to me, "to constantly inform the Chief of the State of the truth, which is too often intentionally kept from the knowledge of the supreme power," this mission I faithfully performed it up to the last hour of my difficult ministry, full well weighing all the while the exceptional personal perils to which this absolute sincerity exposed me. I am as far from regretting the loss of favour that befell me as I am from murmuring at the removal brought upon me by my candour. The human heart, however high it may be placed, and there perhaps more than elsewhere, is subject to the eternal laws that govern humanity. I knew it when I accepted the portfolio of General Police. The subsequent proceedings of the Prince with regard to myself only confirmed the knowledge.

One sentence above all in this letter was calculated to arouse the storm ; it was the one : "The administrations of War and of Finances have a control ; the Ministry of the Interior, which is the only political one, has none." To give M. de Persigny, a restless and domineering spirit, an overseer in so peremptory a manner, was to provoke his susceptibilities. They were not long behind, and from the friend he had been to me he soon became a mistrusting colleague, but too disposed to raise

contention where the interest of the State should have prescribed good understanding.

The first question submitted to the new Cabinet was that of the composition of the two great bodies of the State, the Senate and the Council of State. For the last three years the Prince had felt the serious drawback of having for auxiliaries men who were too closely bound up with the deposed royal families, and who gave the new Government but a lukewarm support. He wished to surround himself with adherents convinced of his power, having faith in its duration, and resolved to burn their vessels. To this sentiment more than to anything else must be attributed the severe measure with regard to the Orleans property.

In fact, the great bodies of the State being constituted on the very morrow of the decrees, it became a matter of difficulty with the Orleanists, unless they broke for good with their party, to accept any high dignity at the hands of the régime that had just struck their princes. Consequently a certain number among them who had solicited the honour of belonging to the Senate and the Council of State withdrew their candidature. The Prince's end was gained. He was above all anxious to keep away the Orleanist element, and he almost completely succeeded.

The 26th January the *Moniteur* published the list of the Senators; it also gave the composition of the Council of State; and a few days later, the 2nd February, it published the decree providing for the election of the members of the Legislative Body. A decree bearing the same date convoked the electoral colleges for the 29th of the same month.

The *Moniteur* had likewise published the regrettable decrees with reference to the property of the Orleans family. They were of two different characters :—

“The members of the Orleans family, their husbands, wives, and descendants, shall be debarred from the possession of all real and personal property whatsoever in France (*aucuns meubles et immeubles en France*).<sup>\*</sup> They shall be required to sell in a final manner all their property within the territory of the Republic.”

The preambles were conceived as follows :—

“Considering that all the Governments which have succeeded each other have judged it necessary to compel the family that ceased to reign to sell

<sup>\*</sup> The word *meuble*, which ordinarily means furniture, signifies personal property when employed in context with the words *biens immeubles* or simply *immeuble*. I must appeal to the reader's leniency throughout the translation of this decree, which could only be rendered into technical English by a conveyancer acquainted with both languages. I shall, however, try to render the meaning as clear as possible.—*Trans.*

the real and personal property they possessed in France.

“That by virtue of this, the 12th January, 1816, Louis XVIII. compelled the members of the family of the Emperor Napoleon to sell their personal estates within a delay of six months, and that the 10th April, 1832, Louis Philippe decreed the same with regard to the elder branch of the Bourbons.

“Considering that public interest and order require such measures, that to-day more than ever considerations of high political interest render it imperative to diminish the influence which the possession of nearly three hundred millions of francs’ worth of landed property in France gives to the Orleans family. . . .”

The second of these decrees ran thus :—

“Article I. The real and personal property comprised in the deed of gift executed by King Louis Philippe on the 7th August, 1830, are restored to the State domains. The State remains charged with the payment of the debts of the civil list of the last dynasty.”

The principal preambles were as follows :—

“Considering that without wishing to infringe the right of property in the persons of the princes of the Orleans family, the President of the Republic



would not justify the confidence of the French nation if he allowed estates that should belong to the nation to be alienated from the State domain.

“Considering that by virtue of the ancient French common law, maintained by the decree of the 21st September, 1790, and by the law of the 8th November, 1814, all the property belonging to princes at the time of their advent to the throne, were instantly incorporated with the Crown domains.

“That in accordance with this, the decree of the 21st September, 1790, likewise the law of the 29th November, 1814, provide that: ‘The private estates of those princes who accede to the throne, and those of which they were possessed during their reign by virtue of what title soever, are lawfully and instantly incorporated with the domains of the nation, and that this incorporation is perpetual and irrevocable.’

“That the consecration of this principle dates back to far distant periods of the monarchy; that among others the example of Henri IV. might be cited. This prince having wished to prevent by letters patent of the 15th April, 1590, the incorporation of his estates with the Crown domains, the Parliament of Paris, by an Act dated the 15th July, 1590, refused to register those letters patent, and

Henri IV. later on approving of this firmness, promulgated in the month of July, 1601, an edict revoking his first letters patent.

“Considering that this fundamental rule of the monarchy has been applied under the reigns of Louis XVIII. and Charles IX. and been reproduced in the law of the 15th January, 1825; that no legislative Act had revoked it at the date of the 9th August, 1830, when Louis Philippe accepted the crown; that therefore, by the sole fact of this acceptance, all the property he possessed at this period became the inalienable property of the State.

“Considering that the universal deed of gift with reservation of usufruct executed by Louis Philippe in favour of his children, but excluding his eldest son, on the 7th August, 1830, hence on the very day when the crown had been conferred upon him, and before his acceptance of the same, which took place on the 9th of that month, was solely intended to prevent the incorporation with the State domains of the considerable property possessed by the prince called to the throne, &c. &c. . . .”

No question of the times has given rise to more passionate discussions than did the one of the decrees. Truth compels us to state that they produced a most unfavourable impression. Public opinion did

not stop to inquire the lawfulness of the measures, it considered them rather as the expression of exaggerated fears, and above all did it refuse to perceive the political aim of which we spoke above. This deplorable effect had been foreseen among the Prince's surroundings. Warnings had not been wanting. Several members of his family had most earnestly entreated him not to carry out his design. Several of his Ministers had added their supplications ; we had done everything to divert the Prince from the path into which some of his dangerous councillors enveigled him. Of the latter M. de Persigny was the most important and the most headstrong. If he could speak to-day, he would not deny that he was the promoter of the idea and the most tenacious guardian of its execution.

The emotion caused by this prejudicial measure was long in subsiding. The publication of the decree dealing with the press laws provided the first diversion to it. It had been impatiently expected. The few notions which those interested in their working had been able to gather beforehand provoked some violent comments.

It is because the legislation which regulates the press laws cannot fail indeed to exercise a considerable influence in the State. Public order, peace, and stability require, in order to be lasting,

a law on the press that shall be adapted to the circumstances and temper of the country in which it is to operate. Never is the truth more difficult to arrive at for the legislator than in this matter.

It would be committing an error indeed to pretend that there can be in the matter of the press an absolute truth, an abstract doctrine capable of being equally applied to the State institutions of every country and of every period, with the reservation of some slight modifications. Only those minds absolutely blinded by an exclusive preference would care to contest the justice of this assertion. It is in this way that both the systematic partisans of absolute liberty and those of discretionary power are equally misled. Likewise are mistaken the defenders of the bastard expedient which is neither liberty nor check, when they expect to find in a system of repression assuming different forms, the imaginary guarantees which they are simple-minded enough to believe sufficiently powerful to restrain liberty within such limits as their illusion has mapped out.

But in default of the absolute truth one may at least find the comparative truth. It consists in respecting certain correlatives which are like certain axioms, and from which the legislator cannot depart with impunity. Those correlatives are the

fundamental character of a nation, her political morals, the grave and recent circumstances she has passed through, and, finally, the nature of her institutions, which must become their essential elements and determine their bases.

The absence of all special legislation, the unfettered use of common right, and the complete liberty of the press, in order to be a benefit and never to become a peril, must be applied to a nation where the very form of government be not exposed to competitions, to attacks, where the search after political progress, moral and material, be the sole aim of the public mind, where internal peace is a heritage which it is the interest of every citizen to defend. Restrained within such limits, controversy becomes a fruitful stimulant to individual and collective initiative, a torch which sheds on the public weal a lustre that propagates, on public woe a light that paralyzes and condemns it. In that way the press becomes the most powerful motor of civilisation, it becomes the daily nourishment that sustains the forward movement and the life of a nation. Among such a nation the laws must emancipate the press from all impediment, and favour the free expansion of its beneficent action.

If on the contrary it be a question of a State

where the form of the government itself be the object of the militant contention of parties, where the idea of overthrow is never abandoned save by him who triumphs, where defeat is only supported by the hope of a near revenge—in such a state, strife being the rule, conflict and revolution the periodical issues of these relentless rivalries, everything that can feed the conflagration of discord becomes a peril, a constitutional inconsistency. The press under those conditions becomes only an instrument of demolition and ruin, a most formidable weapon in the hands of the assailants, the torch that kindles the flames in the hour of danger. The good that some of its organs may accomplish is stifled by the vast emanation of evil one must expect from those who contend.

To avert a similar peril is not only a right, but a duty, for the government which has in its hands the custody and the responsibility of public tranquillity and the prosperity of the country. Circumstances alone can determine the correlative that must exist in such a State. In the days of crisis and danger the press must resign itself to a kind of political silence, to the momentary suspension of its franchise; the resumption of tranquillity must be to it the resumption of a propor-

tional liberty, which may be increased by degrees according to the pledges of good behaviour it gives; but it cannot expect from the public power, the existence of which it ever threatens, that it should disarm, while leaving its enemy to confront it fully armed and ready to renew the struggle.

This would be a way of balancing the chances which no government could commit with impunity. Hence in such a State it is but just to assume that discretionary power must be the principle, and that the derogations from it must still remain subject to beneficent rules. The emancipation of the press must only be initiated in the beginning in a tentative form and as a concession, without the abdication of the right to return to the fundamental principle in the event of abuse and peril.

It is in this mode of regulating this limited freedom that some minds, opposed above all to the dangers of arbitrary power, have tried to discover the basis of a mixed system—that of right tempered solely by judiciary repression. With them the sacrifice to liberty can only be made on condition of seeing the latter replaced by a guarantee founded in some cases on the independence of the magistracy, in others on that of the jury, to the express exclusion of all administrative interference.

Is it possible that there are still to be found political men who found a lasting hope on the effects of repression exclusively confined, as far as the press is concerned, to the tribunal or the jury? If deep reflection and the careful study of these grave problems were not sufficient to demonstrate the absolute inanity of the verdicts given by the one or the other of these two jurisdictions, would not our own experience be enough to convince us of their impotency and danger. Among the governments who have succeeded each other for more than half a century on the storm-tossed soil, those who have wished to give the press every appearance of liberty have only dared do so by hedging their generosity with numerous reservations and stipulations virtually leading to judiciary repression. This judiciary repression has proved to each of them an inefficient check, a weapon which never failed to injure him who wished to serve himself of it.

It is thus that the Restoration successively appealed to the ordinary tribunals, and later on to the jury, without obtaining from either of these two bodies the protection it expected from them.

It is thus that the Government of July, who had instituted the jury as a guarantee of the liberty of the press, but soon recognised its impotency,



tried in vain to struggle against the exactions which it had been rash enough to inscribe on its very charter. The press outran and baulked its prevision, it foiled its most vigorous measures. It is thus that the Republic of 1848, which rewarded revolutionary journalism with the liberty of the press, did not fail to guard itself ere long against its encroachments by the application of the restrictive laws, by its appeal to the right of repression confided to the jury.

At neither of those periods did repression prove either a guarantee or a check. Public prosecution never accomplished anything save the discrediting of the public power, the compromising of the jurisdiction appealed to, the spreading of the doctrines this prosecution pretended to assail. It simply magnified and strengthened the individuals or parties it wanted to reduce.\*

\* But for the fear of developing too extensively this question of the press, on which we may be reproached with having dwelt too long already, we might in support of our opinion have reproduced here some conclusive citations. We should have borrowed them from a remarkable work of M. Ferdinand Giraudeau, in which, with an unimpeachable authority, he examines the various systems of jurisdiction that have been tried in the matter of the liberty of the press. The book is deeply interesting, and those of our readers who attach to the question the importance it possesses will thank us for having called their attention to "*La Presse périodique de 1789 à 1867*," by M. Ferdinand Giraudeau. (Dentu, Editeur.)

The laws of the 17th and 26th May, 9th June, 1819; 17th, 25th March, 1822; 18th July, 1828, the charter of 1830, the law of the 9th September, 1835, the Constitution of 1848, the laws of the 27th July, 1849, and the 16th July, 1850, are simply so many revelations of the impotency of the legislator. The forces he pretends to regulate overwhelm and dominate him.

Hence, at the moment when we had to provide for the regulation of the press in 1852, were not we bound to conclude, from the powerless attempts of the previous laws to maintain the liberty of the press within prudent bounds, that this 'liberty' was doomed to disappear from those States subject to the perilous trials of the upheavings of parties, and that at any rate this liberty could only be allowed to exist on sufferance, that it should never be certain of its morrow? Were we not bound to conclude that for a long while to come this latter and harsh condition was the only practicable rule for France? Might we not be allowed, on the other hand, to seek by means of new methods new guarantees both for the Government and the press itself? Might not the insufficiency of the judiciary repression be usefully replaced in certain cases by administrative repression, and might not the very preventive action

of the Government be usefully exercised to diminish the occasion for indulging harsh measures ?

The decretal law of the 17th February, 1852, upon which the Prince had decided, may justly be called arbitrary as long as it remained within the hands of a Government without effectual control. But under a monarchy with representative institutions does not this very law supply a basis to which the press should not object, seeing that its application remains like that of all other laws subject to the protecting watchfulness of the Assemblies? Because while it arms the public power with the right of suppression necessary for the protection of society against the abuse of liberty, it equally promises by the ever possible non-application of its repressive provisions the fullest liberty for the time when the tranquillity of the public mind and the prudence of the press render such liberty inoffensive.

Undoubtedly in the strictest acceptance of the term a system similar to that of the decretal law of 1852 does not confer a right on the press. But if a latitude guaranteed by the surveillance of the constituted power may at a certain moment become its synonym, would the press really have cause to regret the sacrifice it makes to public interest? Are there not in every constituted

society rights superior to those which the press can claim for itself? The first of those rights, and to which all others must yield, is it not the right society has to protect itself against any enterprise that may endanger its existence or security? Should not the press be the first to give the example of respect due to this right primordial amongst all?

Besides, in the application of this system might not the press consider itself the arbiter of its own destinies? Let it remain what it should be, the counsellor, the enlightened stimulator of the public power, the vigilant guardian of the interests of the country, the supporter of just and fruitful ideas, and its liberty will grow in proportion to the services it renders and to the countenance it obtains from public opinion. Let it, on the other hand, become aggressively and unjustly fault-finding, the tool of passions, inimical to public tranquillity, let the fundamental principles of society begin to regard it as an adversary, let it become the instrument of discord and dissolution, and assuredly it will only have itself to thank for the measures of repression it incurs.

In summing up those rapid surveys, may we not safely maintain that in default of absolute truth, so difficult to find in the matter of press laws, relative

truth may, without much effort, be determined according to the State in which this truth has to be applied, according to their political and moral conditions, and the nature of their institutions. If we put aside the form of absolute government as incompatible with any durable and fixed right of liberty, and under which the press can expect no more than a certain equity under an arbitrary rule without control, we shall be able to determine the formula of the relative truth in press matters.

Absolute liberty, complete absence of repression other than that of common law, such is the favour to which the press may logically aspire in a State where the form of government is subject to no aggression, to no attempt at overthrow, where the internal peace is safe against all menace.

Varying liberty, starting by being subject to legislation like that of 1852, exercised under the control of the Assemblies by an irremovable and responsible power, such is the sole condition that can be accorded to the press in a country where the various parties, ever ready to renew the struggle, constitute an incessant danger to public tranquillity and the security of the established government.

Such a condition, which allows the gradual progress of the press to complete liberty without commotion and without danger to public security,

is it not a hundred times preferable, as far as the press itself is concerned, to ephemeral legislation, to the deceptive concessions wrested from a power which may take back by the exercise of legal repression that part of its privileges which it has been compelled to abandon ?

If after this we seek to deduce from these doctrines the conditions which in our days should be accorded to the press in France, likewise the political system that may secure for it the greatest amount of liberty that shall not be hurtful, have we not the right to maintain that the latter formula constitutes to us the relative truth, viz. "a varying liberty," the legislation of 1852 applied under the guarantee of representative institutions firmly established ?

Perhaps the days of appeasement may come, and Heaven grant it, when the experiment of complete liberty may be attempted yet. But if those who believe themselves sufficiently strong to risk such a formidable experiment desire to remain within the limits of prudence and foresight, let them carefully reserve to themselves the right of returning at the first appearance of danger to this form of varying liberty which we have defined above.

Let us add that we have only spoken here of a legislation to be applied by a monarchical régime

We are not concerned with the venturesome experiments of republican governments. With the Republic the press has experienced all extremes, the arbitrary and the licentious; and if it be in the enjoyment of liberty for a moment, though still cramped by judiciary repression, it must know that for it, as for all, a like government has no future.

At this date of 1852, while France was still under the excitement of the agitation and the strife of parties, we could not entertain this generous experiment of liberty with regard to the press. The situation demanded provident and restrictive measures. The utmost that could be accorded to the press was a legislation that might lend itself one day to the formula we have already given, "varying liberty with the guarantee of representative institutions." The decree of the 17th February, 1852, contained this measure of liberty.

How many trials and calamities would the Empire have saved itself if, instead of yielding to the pernicious counsels of a few ambitious and unconscionable worshippers of liberty, it had prudently entrenched itself within this decree of 1852! It might according to its own pleasure have modified its rigours, enlarged its concessions. That is what it did at first, and there its surrender should have stopped. In this way it would have

succeeded in attaining without injury to the public welfare the period when the Assemblies, assuming a more important function in the State, would have applied the doctrine explained above in a manner such as to give the press the true amount of liberty it might reasonably expect.

The general arrangement of the law was contained in some essential provisions.

The preliminary authorisation of the Government was required for every journal or periodical publication professedly dealing with politics or social economy. It was subject to the Stamp Act. A certain sum of caution money was to be deposited. The Government had the right to rectify, by means of communications to be inserted at the head of the paper, the false news and comments it considered inexact. The jurisdiction which was to try the derelictions and offences was that of the correctional police-courts. (There is no jury in the correctional police-courts, they consist of a judge and two assessors.—*Trans.*)

A journal might be suspended by virtue of a ministerial decision, even if it had never been fined or condemned, but only after two warnings stating the cause of the same, and only for a period not exceeding two months. A journal might be suppressed, either after a judiciary or administrative



suspension, or by virtue of an enactment in the interest of public security, but only by a special decree of the President of the Republic, published in the *Bulletin des Lois* (equivalent to our *London Gazette*). In those provisions lay the arbitrary portion of the decree, and in the application of the latter two lay the opportunity for the severity or the toleration of the Government, according to the times and social necessities.

If we have dwelt rather long on this question of the liberty of the press, we have only given it the space proportioned to its importance. Those who have attentively watched the march of events during the latter years of the Empire may have become aware that it is through having depreciated the principles summarily exposed above, that the Government became engaged in the most inextricable complications. We have just pointed out what prudence, logic, and the interest of the country demanded. It is, alas, but too well known how rashly the Government engaged in venturesome experiments with regard to the press, how it exposed itself to the most formidable perils.

At the same time that the *Moniteur* published the decretal law on the press, the Government promulgated the decrees providing for the organisation of the Council of State and the election

of the deputies. The Council of State became one of the most essential wheels in the mechanism of the Government. Article I. of the decree summed up its functions as follows :—

“The Council of State, under the direction of the President of the Republic, draws up the projects of laws and supports their discussion before the Legislative Body.

“It proposes the decrees that determine : 1, the administrative questions the investigation of which devolves upon it by virtue of its own rules, or in pursuance of legislative provisions ; 2, the pending administrative disputes ; 3, all conflict arising between the administrative authorities and the judiciary with regard to their respective attributes. It is necessarily called upon to advise upon all the decrees regulating public administration or such as may be added to these regulations.

“It deliberates upon the measures of high administrative police, with regard to the functionaries whose acts are submitted to its cognisance by the President of the Republic.

“Finally, it advises upon all questions submitted to it by the President of the Republic or the Ministers.”

In comparison with the past the part allotted to the Legislative Body was extremely restricted.

There was one deputy to every 35,000 electors. The deputies were elected by universal suffrage, without *scrutin de liste*. They were elected for six years. The President of the Republic convoked, adjourned, prorogued, and dissolved the Chamber, and named its presidents and vice-presidents. The Legislative Body discussed and voted the projects of laws and the taxation, but the right of amendment was hedged round with restriction. Every amendment adopted by the commission charged with examining a bill, had to be sent to the Council of State without discussion.

In the event of the amendment not being adopted by the Council of State, it could not be submitted to the discussion of the Legislative Body.

And these restrictions notwithstanding, if the Chamber could not make its will felt save in rare and foreseen cases, it could at least warn; and there are warnings it becomes difficult to ignore. If the Legislative Body had wished, it might, even with the curtailed attributes imposed upon it at the beginning, have exercised an efficient control on certain acts of the public power and on the general march of affairs, and

have taken an important place in the State. If this was not the case, if its rôle became effaced, if its intervention became without authority, the men rather than the institution were to blame for it. An exaggerated submission to the wishes of the Chief of the State often replaced independence and firmness of mind.

If the Legislative Body was called to exercise but an insufficient control, it was assuredly not the Senate that could take the initiative of warning. Its attributes were considerable in some matters and too restricted in others. It is thus that without having the right of discussing clause by clause the laws submitted to it, its legislative rôle was confined to the right of opposing the promulgation of:—

1. Such laws as shall be contrary to or calculated to injure the Constitution, religion, liberty of worship, the liberty of the subject, the equality of the people before the law, the rights of property, and the principle of the removability of the magistracy.

2. Such as might compromise the defence of the territory.

The Senate might, under certain conditions, initiate modifications of the Constitution. It was called upon to regulate everything that had not been

provided for by the Constitution, and which became necessary to its working. Finally, it had to consider the petitions addressed by the nation. It was this latter attribute which it exercised with the greatest authority; but this right of examination was merely perfunctory, and more than once the wise decisions of the higher Assembly on such petitions were condemned to everlasting sleep in the pigeon-holes of some Ministry.

To set the new governmental mechanism created by the Constitution of the 14th January in motion, it was necessary that the deputies should be elected and the Legislative Body be constituted. A decree of the 2nd February convoked the electoral colleges for the 29th of the same month.

Everywhere the intention prevailed to send to the Chamber men who would facilitate the march of the Government. One might have trusted to the spirit of goodwill that animated the electoral body, but the Prince made it a point of asserting the right of the public power to interfere in the electoral debates. It was decided to bring forward in every electoral circumscription a candidate officially designated and supported by the administration. The principle of official candidature was advanced in this way; and let us say here that for every legitimate Government, which invites, by no matter

what title, the country to participate in the governmental mechanism, the official candidature becomes a right and a duty. Especially does it become so when universal suffrage figures among the constitutional institutions of the State; because under such a régime passion may too easily take the place of wisdom, and against those eventual perils the public power should not be refused the means of defence.

To what, in fact, does a legislative election amount. It is the challenge addressed to the country to pronounce upon the policy of the Government.

Under what form are those solemn experiments tried? What is their nature? What lesson may one expect, what consequences deduct from them?

At such times two camps are confronting each other.

On one side are those who completely approve all the acts of the Government. If the struggle becomes at all animated, their ranks are increased by the Conservatives of all shades, who, in the interest of a dynasty, make a sacrifice of the apprehensions aroused by the march of affairs.

On the other side are those who openly blame the policy of the Government, and who have invariably for auxiliaries the revolutionaries inimical

to all legitimate power. In similar alliances the direction of the movement ever belongs to the most violent; by virtue of this title the revolutionaries possess themselves of it, and in their efforts to depreciate the public power and the men that support it, they exhaust all lawful means; they even transgress the limits traced by the latter, and shrink at nothing to insure the victory of their candidates. They are the assailants, and the violence of the attack is ever, in matters electoral, superior to the ardour of the defence. Concert and discipline are conditions of success ordinarily found among the opponents, rarely to be met with among those who support the powers that be when it is not the revolutionary power.

Left to themselves those two parties would not contest with equal arms. Hence the Government has the right to intervene in the struggle; on condition, however, of exercising this right with moderation and dignity. Is not the Government, in those electoral contests, treated as an accused, and has not the accused the right to defend himself? When so many unjust attacks, calumnies, injuries are directed against the public power, against those who support it, should it stand by, an indifferent spectator of this great debate, in which its acts are discussed, and its honour and existence

often brought into jeopardy. The duty of the Government is to enlighten public opinion, and to use its natural auxiliaries, its functionaries, its agents, to combat error and to propagate truth. Its functionaries and agents are by right supposed to be the partisans of its policy, seeing that they remain in its service; hence it is but logical to expect an unqualified co-operation from them. Besides, is not the French mind more inclined to criticism and to opposition than to healthy appreciation of the acts of the public power? and when a Government accords a people this immense right, called "universal suffrage," is it not but just that it should reserve to itself, as a counter-weight, the nomination of candidates who command its preferences, and that it should use its natural means to favour their election?

A power issued from the revolution, and deriving its authority only from the latter, would attempt in vain to invoke the benefits of this official candidature; its origin interdicts its logical intervention, and the principles professed by the men of the revolution commands them to abstain from a practice they have never ceased to condemn.

The official candidature can only be the right of a Government that exists by virtue of a regular institution. In France, not to mention other



countries, the Monarchy and the Empire can only invoke a similar origin. Each holds its power from the regular delegation of the nation.

Royalty is not based solely upon divine right. The chief of the dynasty owes his elevation to the throne also to an election, which, for all it had not the large foundations of our modern customs, constitutes nevertheless a regular right, to which has been added the consecration of centuries. His legitimacy is beyond dispute.

The legitimacy of the Empire is equally indisputable.

The *Senatus Consultus* of 1800, and that of 1804, which gave first the power, later on the crown, to Napoleon I., and founded the fourth French estate, are two immense and unfettered manifestations of the will of the nation.

Hence Empire and Royalty have had, during their existence, to protect a right and to defend the will of the nation. In receiving their investiture they expressly accepted the obligation to use all their efforts to the support of the monarchical edifice, and to apply all methods of Government calculated to defeat the machinations of the Revolution. The day that Monarchy assumed the representative form, when it submitted its actions, by the system of election, to the judgment of the

country, that day the official candidature became an imperative obligation, a condition essential to its existence.

What, on the other hand, is the origin of the revolutionary Governments which during this century have imposed themselves upon the country ? What are their rights ? Where is their delegation ? Their origin is the barricades ; their right is their violent usurpation ; as for the delegation of the country, they have taken care not to appeal to it. Hence those revolutionary Governments have neither rights nor delegation to defend, and the official candidature in their hands would only be a fresh usurpation to add to the first one. ' It is probably because of this, that in order to be logical—in words at least—the revolutionaries persist in condemning official candidature, meanwhile reserving to themselves, when they are in power, its most violent usage for their benefit. Hence, to bring back the doctrine of which we have given the bases to the subject under discussion, we may affirm that for the Empire the official candidature was, as we insisted, a right and a duty. No doubt the intervention of Louis Napoleon's Government was not at all necessary in the legislative elections of the 25th February to secure its majority in the Assembly ; but he committed an act of fore-

sight by asserting his principles, and shielded himself beforehand, in the event of less prosperous days, from the accusation of having forged fresh arms to defend himself.

In those elections of 1852 the desire to second the Prince was so eager, that the candidates of the Government stood in no need whatsoever of administrative support. A mere nomination meant an election, and, apart from five or six colleges where local influences prevailed against the official candidature, the nominees of the Government obtained crushing majorities.

Previous to the meeting of the Legislative Body, a delicate question had to be settled, namely, the nomination of its President. There had been no hesitation with regard to the Senate. The ex-king, Jerome Napoleon, uncle to the Prince-President, had accepted this high mission, and no opposition candidate was put forward.

The nomination for presidency of the Legislative Body was to arouse a downright storm. M. de Morny, for all he had announced at the time of his withdrawal from the Ministry, his weariness of public affairs, and his resolve to keep away from them, cherished nevertheless an ardent desire to get back to power. He knew how to impose himself at certain times upon the President. He had

succeeded, at the time of the 2nd December, in wresting his appointment to the Ministry of the Interior from him; he succeeded a second time in betraying the Prince into a promise of the Presidency of the Chamber. But the hostile attitude of M. de Morny towards the whole of the Ministry would have caused his nomination to be considered a slight upon the Cabinet; hence it was arranged that all of us should insist upon the Prince reconsidering his first intentions. It was resolved, besides, to request Prince Jerome to add his remonstrances to ours. Prince Jerome used all his influence with his nephew; it was he who obtained that M. de Morny should not be President of the Chamber, and that the dignity should be conferred upon M. Billault.

The 29th March was the day fixed for the meeting of the Chambers; but before this date, and during the four months of Louis Napoleon's dictatorship, it would be difficult to say how many things had been done, the results that had been obtained, the complete transformation that had taken place in the state of the country, in her political, moral, and financial situation; the great and fruitful enterprises the State had inaugurated, the many useful reforms that had been decreed, the impulse that had been given to business, the

flights industry and commerce had taken ; to point out the vivifying breath of prosperity that blew from one end of France to the other. If the country had been prudent enough to prefer the benefits of stability, the prosperity the latter brings in its train, the wealth it distributes, to the trouble aroused by adventurous experiments and the ruin they lead to, assuredly France had a splendid horizon opening before her.

We will not try to make light of an objection we overheard now and then. "If the 2nd December," it has been said, "dragged the country from the horrors of anarchy, it has not been able to found a durable régime. Revolution lifted its head once more ; it has resumed its march, it wields a sovereign sway to-day ; no, the 2nd December, considered from that point of view, has only been a fresh stoppage in the Revolution."

First of all, if it had been nothing more than this interim of twenty years in the costly and the pernicious occupation of the country by the Revolution, we should still have the right to say that the 2nd December has not been a benefit to be ignored, especially if we consider the terrible nature of the demagogic upheavals. But it would have been more than a stoppage, it would have been the final deliverance, if the promptings of patriotism, which

awoke for an instant to aid the Government in its onward march, had not rapidly made place for party spirit. Instead of a sympathetic consideration, like that of the first hours, the new power failed not to find itself before long confronted by the reconstituted crusade of the ardent leaders of the former parties—the coalition. The coalition has never ceased, by every means in its power, to pursue its work of destruction, and on the ruins of the country it has been able to contemplate at leisure the fruits of its endeavours.

Our aim is not to justify what history will call “the mistakes of the Second Empire;” but if we had wished to undertake this task, it is not in this volume it could have been accomplished. Criticism would scarcely find its vantage-ground in this period of Louis-Napoleon’s Government of which we have had to speak. In our next publication we shall find ourselves in presence of painful circumstances. All parties are led away by passions, as all Governments commit errors; we shall unhesitatingly disclose the truth. We may be permitted to say to-day that the men who counselled and succeeded in swaying the sovereign in the last years of his reign will have to give an account of the pernicious use they made of their influence. This Empire, of which the 2nd December had laid

the foundations, could have lived, could have become great, could have put a final stop to the Revolution. In the critical days the men did not rise to the level of their task. The burden had become too heavy for one only: it is from having ignored the warnings given to him; it is from having accorded unwholesome liberties to the country, instead of giving her serious constitutional guarantees; it is from having mistaken the real aspirations of the nation, that the splendid edifice of 1852 collapsed. If we were condemned to witness, as mournful lookers-on, the destruction of this grand work of the 2nd December, the foundering of our hopes, we shall not be debarred, at the proper time, from allotting to each his part of the responsibilities.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE EMPIRE.

Opening of the Chambers.—Reconstruction of the Cabinet.—Origin of M. de Persigny's Hostility.—The dangers of Sincerity.—Journey of the Prince-President.—The *Senatus Consultus* of the 7th November, 1852 —The *Plébiscite* of the 22nd November —The Poll.—The Empire is restored.

ON the 29th March the Prince-President opened the first session of the Chambers, and thus put into operation the Constitution which was his work. In language full of dignity he reminded the country of the task he had just accomplished and the motives that had prompted him.

“The Dictature which the people confided to me ceases to-day,” said Louis Napoleon. “Affairs will resume their regular course. It is with a feeling of deep satisfaction that I have come hither to proclaim the putting into operation of the Constitution; because my constant desire has been not only to restore order, but to make it durable by endowing France with institutions appropriate to her wants. . . . Therefore when, thanks to some men of courage, thanks, above all, to the energetic attitude of the army, all perils were averted in a



few hours, my first care was to ask the nation for instructions. Society has been too long like a pyramid turned upside down ; I replaced it on its base."

No happier comparison could have defined in so few words the transformation which had been accomplished ; hence deafening applause showed the Prince that his thoughts were shared by his listeners.

After the numerous creations that had marked the period of the Dictature, there remained few urgent legislative measures to propose to the Chamber. Their session was of short duration ; it was, nevertheless, sufficiently long to get successfully through some useful work. An important result sprang from this first intercourse between the great powers of the State—mutual confidence. If later on the Chambers showed too great a submission to the Crown, there was as yet nothing but a spontaneous and sympathetic co-operation testifying to a complete conformity of views and sentiments.

In a political situation that has assumed so tranquil an aspect once more, being in office, while far from a sinecure, was exempt from those incessant preoccupations amidst which the latter years had been passed. From certain points of

view it had its attractions ; hence the ministerial portfolios were the object of numerous and eager solicitations.

Absolute Governments, or those that approach to it in their working, are not, any more than parliamentary Governments, free from personal competitions. The form of those contests may differ ; their aim is the same. To some the craving for power is the principal motive ; to others it is the wish to strengthen their own position, by a junction with a sympathetic political group or party. Intrigue is too often the means depended on for success.

Which of these causes was it that determined as early as the 28th July the reconstruction of a Cabinet dating from the 22nd January only ? We do not think it necessary to explain the point. The *Moniteur* published on the 28th July the following nominations :—

M. Drouyn de Lhuys was appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs, instead of the Marquis de Turgot, who retired.

M. Fould succeeded the Count de Casabianca at the Ministry of State.

M. Magne replaced M. Lefèvre-Durufié at the Ministry of Public Works and Commerce. The three retiring ministers were called to the Senate.

At the time of these ministerial modifications being discussed, I had noticed the cause of the growing hostility of M. de Persigny towards me. He had used all his influence to get me appointed Minister of State, and tried all his persuasion to induce me to accept this post. He showed me the honour of being placed, hierarchically, the first among the Ministers. Such was, in fact, the rank conferred upon the Minister of State, to compensate as it were, by a fictitious honour, for the absence of all real importance. However difficult the mission I performed at the Ministry of General Police, however perilous the efforts I made to make this mission profitable to the Government and the Prince, I preferred political importance with its dangers, to a high sinecure with the sweets of repose and security. I remained at my post, therefore, and it is from that day that my colleague of the Interior, who no doubt contemplated, in the event of my accepting the Ministry of State, the amalgamation of the functions of the Ministry of Police with his own—it is from that day that M. de Persigny, seeing the fruitlessness of his efforts with me, opened a relentless campaign against me. In order to accomplish my overthrow, he allied himself with my enemies, whose number my functions increased day by day. The Prince's sentiments

towards me rendered eviction, pure and simple, difficult. It was arranged that the campaign should be conducted on the grounds of the necessity to suppress the Ministry of General Police, if only as a guarantee to the country that absolute tranquillity reigned once more. Operations were begun; and my recollection does not revert without certain pride to this obstinate crusade against me. It had at its head all the high caballers of the political world. I had more than once divulged their machinations, and I had already frequently experienced the effects of their anger. Fortunately there remains to honourable people always this great consolation, namely, to find public opinion severely condemn such adversaries and detractors. I had ample proofs of this consolation given to me.

But those slight political agitations were only confined to a limited circle; the country ignored their causes, and attached no importance to them. The nation was fully given up to the enjoyment of the renewed and signal prosperity, which increased day by day. There remained, however, one vague preoccupation; the chief power had as yet but a limited duration of office; the word "Republic," though nothing but the word remained, worried her peace, and detracted from her complete satisfaction. On every occasion the people manifested

an obstinate desire to go back to the Empire. An opportunity was offered to the Prince to judge for himself of this ardent wish of the nation to consolidate on his head the power she had already twice accorded to him. From all parts of France addresses poured in, soliciting a visit from the Chief of the State. The principal towns sent deputations to the Elysée to emphasize their requests. The Prince resolved to comply with those wishes, and to undertake a long journey, which would enable him to visit those towns where he had not as yet been. Bourges, Moulins, Lyons, Marseilles, Nîmes, Toulouse, Bordeaux, were to be the principal stages.

The 14th September, 1852, the Prince left Paris. He wished to have two of his Ministers constantly with him. General de Saint-Arnaud and I accompanied him at the beginning of the journey. Bourges was the first town where the Prince found himself in presence both of considerable military forces and of a great concourse of the population. However convinced every part of France was of the cordial reception awaiting the Chief of the State, there was, nevertheless, a real impatience to see under what form this manifestation of public feeling would show itself. From that point of view, and above all as a signal to the other departments through which the Prince was to pass, the

events at Bourges would assume a decisive importance. In their "*Histoire Populaire de l'Empereur Napoléon III.*" MM. de Cassagnac give on this subject an interesting account of an incident said to have occurred between M. de Persigny, Minister of the Interior, and M. Pastoureau, Prefect of the Department of the Cher. The latter, summoned by his chief, is said to have received from him, unknown to the Prince, the necessary instructions for the Chief of the State being welcomed by the people with the cries of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" The impulse being given in this way, the masses would no doubt join in the manifestation. This anecdote has been borrowed by MM. de Cassagnac from the unpublished memoirs of M. de Persigny. We should add that the solicitude of the Minister of the Interior was superfluous, because no one doubted that the Prince would be hailed everywhere with, as it were, an explosion of sympathy for the restoration of the Empire.

The civil element played assuredly the most important rôle in the reception of Louis Napoleon, but his welcome by the army was equally of interest. The sentiments of the latter were well known. It wanted the Empire; it wanted it, if that could be possible, even still more than the people, but it had not, like the people, its entire liberty of mani-

festation. Discipline has its exactions, and the thing was to strike the exact balance between the dictates of duty and the eagerness to share in the general movement. What, therefore, were the troops likely to do? What would be their attitude at the moment of the march past? That was the question which the very chiefs most ardent for the restoration of the Empire asked themselves; not from hesitation, but in their estimate of what was permissible while on duty. They were the more perplexed that the example was to come from them. The cry from their lips would certainly be repeated by their men. Should they give the impulse to the general wish by crying "Vive l'Empereur!" or should they try to calm the general ardour by crying only "Vive le Président!" or "Vive Napoléon!" That was the question the superior officers of the small army to be reviewed by the Chief of the State asked themselves. The general of division, the Duke de Mortemart, who was to have its command, was, by his family traditions, also by his personal preferences, perhaps, attached to the cause of the Bourbons; he could not prevail on himself to assume an attitude at variance with his past. His mind was made up. He would preserve silence when, passing at the head of his troops

before the Prince, he had to make the customary salute. An incident provided the means to counteract the reserve to which the Duke de Mortemart felt himself bound.

The general commanding the sub-division of Bourges, Viscount de Noue, was one of my friends. This question of the form under which Louis Napoleon was to be acclaimed had seriously pre-occupied him. General de Mortemart would have to pass the first before the Prince, and to take up his station opposite the latter. General de Noue would follow immediately after the Duke de Mortemart, at the head of all the troops. He expected that his chief would keep silent. But was his liberty engaged by this, or might he give free vent to his personal inspirations? In a confidential interview General de Noue consulted me on the subject. I, for my part, saw no obstacle to his acting according to his sentiments, and seeing that he considered it a duty to cry "Vive l'Empereur!" I deemed that in doing so he did not deviate from his duty at such a moment, nor from the respect due to a chief who abstained from pronouncing himself. I frankly told him my opinion.\*

\* Like his chief, General de Noue belonged to the Legitimist party. Still he was attached to it by birth and family relations rather than



At the review General de Mortemart, when he passed before the Prince, saluted silently and took up his station facing him. At a distance of about fifty yards behind the Duke came General de Noue. Gracefully wheeling the magnificent Arab he bestrode round to the troops, he cried "Vive l'Empereur!" but the cheers of the soldiers had already drowned his voice, and from a hundred thousand lungs at once came this self-same cry of "Vive l'Empereur!" Each squadron, each battalion, repeats it in turn; and equally the dense masses of the people take up the acclamation which faithfully interprets their hopes, and their desire to have done with the provisional régime.

After the troops, the people wish to organise a march-past before Napoleon. It is no longer enthusiasm, it becomes delirium. In this manifestation the great and the small are confounded; it

from personal convictions. The young general had been away in Africa; hence he had remained a stranger to the events that agitated his country. In his interview with me, he summed up his opinion in two words. "I understand nothing of politics," he said, "I perceive only one thing in what is going on—that the Republic leads France to her ruin. The Legitimate Monarchy has my sympathies and my preference, but it is incompatible with the actual state of the public mind. The Empire only is possible; it is the only régime that can save us from anarchy, and it is because of this that I do not hesitate to wish for the Empire."

is the whole of France, who by this passionate delegation summon the Chief of the State to give her back without delay, definite institutions—the Imperial Monarchy.

If M. de Persigny had witnessed this triumphal ovation at Bourges, he would have dispensed with his counsels to the prefect. The people had not waited for the municipalities to give the signal. The moment they perceived the Prince in the distance they had saluted him with frenzied cries of “Vive l’Empereur !” Never was there a more spontaneous manifestation, more ardent in its expression than that of Bourges, and let it be said at once of the whole of France also, as manifested in those counties through which the Prince passed in the course of his journey of 1852.

If in Louis Napoleon’s nature there existed one faculty that swayed all the others, it was assuredly the gift of unmistakably gauging the aspirations of the people. He, as it were, felt within himself the vibration of the national chord ; he showed it once and for all in this instance.

The question of the Prince’s journey had been discussed at various times in our ministerial councils. It was necessary to make certain arrangements in view of this grand event, and the Prince willingly shared the debates they provoked.

But if any of us alluded to the taking of measures to favour the manifestation of public feeling, the Prince's countenance became overcast (it was his ordinary way of showing his displeasure) and he cut short all deliberation. One day he went farther still, and to a proposal of M. de Persigny, to do what he did do after all with the prefect of the Department of Cher, the Prince answered with some show of temper :—

“I will not have the country guided. I want her to be left absolutely free to express her feelings as she likes. I wish to know the real truth through my own eyes and my own ears, and to prove in this way the truth of what is written to me every day from all parts of France. My journey is an interrogatory. I will not have the answer to it prepared; I mean to have it in all its spontaneity, and on it I shall shape my conduct for the future.”

Bourges had given the answer; it was startling and peremptory. Nevers was what Bourges had been, and Moulins was what Nevers had been. The departments had gone out to meet the Chief of the State. Entire communes camped round the town; all fatigue was gaily supported. They wanted to see the saviour of the country, to express their gratitude to him by their acclamations, and

above all to give him to understand the wish of the country to see the Empire restored.

At Roanne, at St. Etienne, at Lyons, the same concourse of populations, the same enthusiasm, the same frenzied cries of "Vive l'Empereur !"

At Lyons, the Prince-President inaugurated the equestrian statue of Napoleon I. In the speech he made on that occasion, he showed that he understood the sense and the drift of the manifestations he had met with on his journey. He said :—

"We have scarcely emerged from those moments of trouble during which all sense of good and evil were confounded, the most vigorous minds perverted. Prudence and patriotism require that in such moments the nation should recover from her excitement before fixing her destinies, and as yet it is difficult for me to know under which name I may be able to render the greatest services. If the modest title of President could facilitate the mission confided to me, and from which I have not shrunk, I for one should not wish to change this title for that of Emperor from motives of personal interest."

The more the Prince seemed to hesitate to accept the crown, the greater grew the ardour of the people in asking him to have done with the

Republic. At Grenoble, Valence, Avignon, Aix, and Marseilles, there was an increased renewal of the cries of "Vive l'Empereur!"

At Marseilles, in laying the first stone of the cathedral, Louis Napoleon spoke to the clergy and the Catholics of France. He unreservedly opened his heart when he said, "Whenever I can I shall strive to sustain and propagate the ideas of religion, the most sublime of all, seeing that they are a guide in prosperity and a consolation in misfortune. My Government, I say it with pride, is perhaps the only one that has supported religion for itself; it supports it not as a political instrument, not to please a party, but solely from conviction, and from the love of the good it inspires, as of the truth it teaches.

Toulon, Nîmes, Montpellier, Carcassonne, Toulouse, Agen, received in their turn the visit of the Prince, and vied with each other in expressing their gratitude and their hopes in him. Hesitation was no longer permissible, and the people had to a certain extent the right to know how their aspirations would be received. The rôles had changed: it was no longer Louis Napoleon who sought to know, it was the people who put the question. The cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" were, at the beginning of the journey, a kind of edging on

to the Empire; they became an interrogation at the end. The Prince understood this, and at Bordeaux, at the banquet of the Chamber of Commerce, he allowed to pierce through, even more clearly than at Lyons, the impressions he brought back from his journey. That day the Empire was resolved upon. One might easily gather the fact from the words of the Prince, when he said:—

“The purpose of my journey, as you know, was to see for myself our beautiful provinces of the South, to judge of their wants. It has, however, given rise to a result much more important.

“In fact, I say it with a candour as far removed from pride as from false modesty, never has a nation testified in a manner more direct, more spontaneous, more unanimous her will to be emancipated from the preoccupations for the future by consolidating in the self-same hand a power sympathetic to her.

“It is because she knows at this hour the deceptive hopes with which she was lulled to sleep, and the dangers that threatened her. She knows that in 1852 society was going headlong to ruin, because each party consoled itself beforehand for the wreck with the hope of planting its standard

on the spars that might remain afloat. She is thankful to me for having saved the ship by only flying the colours of France.

“Disabused of absurd theories, the people have become convinced that those pretended reformers were nothing but dreamers, because there always was inconsistency and disproportion between their means and the results promised.

“To-day France surrounds me with her sympathies, because I do not belong to the family of idealists. To accomplish the welfare of the country, there is no need to apply new systems, but to give above all confidence in the present, security for the future. That is why France seems to wish to come back to the Empire.”

From Bordeaux to Paris, there was a continual ratification of the speech in the former town. Angoulême, Rochefort, La Rochelle, Niort, Poitiers, Tours, saluted the Empire as an accomplished fact; and, indeed, events did not fail before long to transform those unanimous hopes into reality. The wish to restore the Empire had been so universally manifested during the journey of the Prince-President, that resistance to the wishes of the country could not be prolonged. It was not Louis Napoleon who overthrew the Republic; the latter collapsed amidst general reprobation. In ceasing

to impose upon the nation this form of government, which still left some causes for anxiety, the Prince performed a duty from which it became impossible for him to withdraw.

On the 19th October the Senate was convoked to examine the important question of restoring the Imperial Monarchy ; and the 7th November it voted a *Senatus Consultus*. The essential provisions were as follows :—

“The Imperial dignity is restored.

“Louis Napoleon Bonaparte is Emperor of the French, under the name of Napoleon III.

“The Imperial dignity is hereditary in the direct and lawful male descendants of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte in order of primogeniture, and to the perpetual exclusion of the females and their descendants.

“The following proposal shall be submitted to the French people in the form determined by the Decrees of the 2nd and 4th December, 1851 : ‘The French people wish the restoration of the Imperial dignity in the person of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, with the hereditary rights in his direct descendants, legitimate or adoptive, and confer upon him the right of regulating the order of succession to the throne in the Bonaparte family in the manner pro-



vided for in the *Senatus Consultus* of the 7th November, 1852.'"

The people were convoked in their constituencies for the 21st and 22nd November, to accept or reject the plebiscitary project passed by the Senate, and the Legislative Body was convened for the 25th of November, for the purpose of revising, counting, and declaring the result of the votes.

As in 1848, as on the 21st February, 1851, violent enthusiasm brought almost the whole of the nation to the poll, which gave the subjoined results:—

For the restoration of the Empire	.	.	.	7,824,189
Against	.	.	.	253,145

Hence the Republic had lawfully ceased to exist. The Empire rose radiantly on its abandoned ruins. This self-same generation, this self-same people who, led on by unwholesome excitations, had overtoppled a throne in 1848, in the name of liberty, confessed their mistake. After having bitterly expiated their passions and errors, they were still more unanimous to build up again than they had been to destroy. And, as if to give a startling proof

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of the want of logic of those revolutionary adventures, which for almost a century had periodically desolated France, this same people this time immolated their idol of yesterday. For some time, at least, they joyfully loaded liberty with chains.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### CONCLUSION : A GLANCE AT THE 2ND DECEMBER.

What feelings has the 2nd December evoked in the Nation ?—Who has approved, who has condemned it ?—Who approves, who condemns it to-day ?—How will History judge ?—What the Revolutionaries did in July, 1830, in February, 1848, in September, 1870, and the 18th March, 1871.—Their motives.—The origin of their power.—Contrast with the 2nd December.—Summing up.

IN our Preface we took care to warn the reader that, though writing the history of Louis Napoleon's presidency, our principal object was to describe the 2nd December. The latter, in fact, sways the whole of this period of our contemporary history, and in virtue of this it may not be uninteresting to sum up in a few words the impression it is likely to produce.

We have shown the concatenation of circumstances that fatally led to the 2nd December; we have said what were its consequences, the transformations it brought to the constitutional régime of France; let us endeavour to examine here, without partiality, the sentiments with which the nation received it. We will at the same time try to find out the appreciation that prevails to-day

with regard to this grand episode. Finally, we will endeavour to forecast the judgment of history, to determine the place that will be allotted to it in this series of grand events, which, since the beginning of the century, have so frequently changed the form of government.

And first of all, what was its reception ?

To judge it soberly we must go back to a few days after the struggle, namely after the accomplished events, when the country, freed from the anxiety the revolt had produced, could pronounce herself unreservedly. At that moment the reception accorded to the 2nd December may be summed up in one word. It was an immense ovation.

In France, since agitation and revolutions have periodically endangered every interest, there has sprung up, independent of all ardent political preferences, a considerable group, uniting, from the most humble to the most opulent, all those who own something or are in the way of doing so. This group aspires first of all to tranquillity; it wishes before everything for peace and order. It has given to itself the name which best translates its instincts: it calls itself the Conservative party. In consequence of the parcelling out of the soil, this group by itself makes up numerically more than half of the country.

We may say that the Conservative party unanimously applauded the success of Louis Napoleon.

The Napoleonic legend still existed in all its vigour; it still had its fanatics, and their vociferous joy mingled with the plaudits of the Conservative party. Some beheld the return at last of lost security; others hailed the return of a dynasty still popular, notwithstanding its misfortunes. It was from this imposing whole that the ovation came, and it was the more startling that the vanquished party silently submitted to its defeat.

What is the appreciation that prevails to-day on the 2nd December?

It is not surprising that resentment should still gnaw the heart of many who suffered from it; it is but the law of nature. If loftiness of mind enables its possessors now and then to escape the indulgence of vulgar rancour, it is not among the ranks of demagoguery that such praiseworthy exceptions can be looked for. But all sensible people, all moderate men, even a great number of the vanquished of that period—in one word, the masses of the country—do not they consider to-day that the 2nd December was a patriotic enterprise, that it was a day of deliverance, and that eighteen years of prosperity, which were its consequence, will supply the history

of the century with one of its most memorable pages?

In vain would they tell us that the majority accorded in our days to the Republicans is the proof of the condemnation of the 2nd December.

Such language would be a grave error, and would show ignorance of the inmost feelings of the country. It would be well, with a view to the future, to weigh the justice of such a verdict.

That which constitutes the Republican majority to-day are not the Republicans, properly speaking. That opinion, from the point of view of doctrine, has but few partisans. The Republican majority is composed of elements the most dissimilar. It counts first, by prescriptive right, the revolutionaries by profession, the needy place-seekers, those who have lost caste, the envious; these are its militant nucleus.

Secondly, it contains the peaceable and by no means numerous group of believers in the Republican form of government, the doctrinaires of democracy; all those assuredly protest against what with a shudder of horror they call "the crime of the 2nd December." But that which constitutes the numbers in the Republican majority, and which consequently provides its force, is a fraction of the Conservative party, unfortunately very important,

which, from an ill-considered idea of tranquillity, prefers to live in a state of discomfort which is not altogether ruin, rather than seek deliverance in an energetic vindication which it knows to be fraught with some temporary risks. The powers that be, such is to those misguided Conservatives the Government that must be supported. They do not like it, but they suffer it; they resign themselves, and translate this resignation by an electoral co-operation whence issue the Republican and revolutionary majorities of our Assemblies.

Let it not be said to us that those adherents from fear, those Republicans for the nonce, profess hatred or repulsion to the 2nd December. No, they regret in silence, some the Monarchy, others the Empire, and would hail a return of the past that commanded their preferences, if they awoke one morning under the Monarchy restored or the Empire re-established.

When the 2nd December is mentioned to them, they answer with a sigh of envy; they sigh because there is not another accomplished fact of the kind to be applauded.

We are indisputably right in saying to-day, more than thirty years after the 2nd December, that the healthy part of the nation still applauds this grand act and the benefits it produced. It only forestalls history by so doing.

History, in fact, will restore its real character to this grand event; it will take into consideration the conditions of the country, the dangers that threatened her, the conspiracies against the power and the life of the Prince; it will appreciate the aim he set himself, it will applaud the success that crowned his work; it will solemnly record, to hand them down to future generations, those immense and successive acclamations of an entire nation, who, in her full liberty, in her all-power to constitute, disposed of her own destinies, and restored the power to the dynasty founded by her suffrages at the beginning of the century. It is not history which will write down in its pages this word which our enemies would fain render ignominious, but which only translates their hatred and rancour, "the crime of December," for such is its customary appellation with every good Republican.

Let us condescend for a moment to compare our acts with theirs, and ask the leaders of the Revolution why people should not rather say, the crime of 1830, the crime of 1848, the crime of 1870. Let us make this comparison as complete as possible; let us look at their motives, let us look at their acts, let us look at their causes; let us finally look at the guarantees they give to the country when the deed has been done, and then say



what we were and did from all those points of view.

Well then, on the 29th July, 1830, those heroes of July, as they style themselves, overthrew a throne, exiled a dynasty, which for centuries had contributed to the grandeur of France; which for the last fifteen years had given order, security, and a liberty which all honest people judged amply sufficient for the temper of the country; they drove out a king who but yesterday shed glory on our arms, by giving us, through the taking of Algiers, a new kingdom, as it were. They threw Paris into the horrors of civil strife, our streets reeked with blood; they murdered brave soldiers to punish them for their fidelity; and when they had exhausted their orgies they dub with the name of "glorious" those mournful days which are nothing but a detestable stage in our revolutionary sufferings. And when once more in 1848 the same men, the majority of whom had made themselves the chiefs and promoters of the revolt in 1830—when once more they overthrew the royalty they this time had set up themselves, when they harangue a valiant army into forsaking its duty—when, as in 1830, they turned Paris upside down, causing it to bristle with barricades, showering shell and shot upon it—when they did all this, did they perform

a signal act of patriotism? Was France likely to find glory, fortune, prosperity, liberty, in their usurpation of power? No; they destroyed for the love of destruction and for the sake of spoil. They tore down a constitutional fabric which for eighteen years had contributed to the regular development of liberal institutions. They swept away order and security, and put into their stead disorder and anarchy. Those days of 1848 are "glorious" also according to them.

And the farther we advance the more the Revolution piles up the ruins.

If to the Empire the 4th September is a day of bitter mourning, it is to the Republicans a disgrace that can never be wiped out. This liberty of which they constantly usurp the banner, had not the Empire just given it a large place in its new institutions? And yet, in presence of the enemy, they did not hesitate to add the horrors of a revolution to the anguish of our defeats. The last efforts at resistance of our unfortunate country were paralyzed in this way; peace was refused, and in prolonging a senseless defence they succeeded in trebling our ransom.

The revolutionaries of 1870 were to inflict a still more terrible and final calamity upon this France, already so exhausted. Impotent to hold

the power of which they had possessed themselves, they allowed to grow in the shadow of their weakness the horrible debauch called the Commune, and by their criminal want of foresight Paris was given over to the most dreadful Vandalism. Our monuments were burned down, our walls destroyed, our treasuries pillaged, our prelates, magistrates, and generals assassinated. The blood flowed in torrents. Are they also "glorious," those days of the 4th September, 1870, and the 18th March, 1871.

But to resume. We have told the causes that produced the 2nd December, the necessities and the mission to which Louis Napoleon yielded. If we addressed a similar question to the revolutionaries, how could they answer it?

Who incited them to revolt in 1830, 1848, or 1870? In the name of which fraction of the country were her laws and constitutions broken?

In 1830, a few deputies, a few ambitious journalists, a few philosophers, who were but the mere plagiarists of their forerunners, provoked the movement; they unlocked the flood of hatred against the clergy and nobility, a reminiscence of 1793 over again. Nevertheless the people remained deaf to their seductions; they lived happily enough under the protection of institutions, the application

of which went the even tenor of its way, without more jolting than is generally experienced by a new régime. When the revolutionaries startled Paris with the discharge of their muskets, they were the echo neither of a popular desire nor of a general wish; they arrogated to themselves the position both of the givers and receivers of an imaginary mandate.

In 1848, what causes, what reasons did there exist for a revolution? Was there, at any rate, to serve as a pretext, a serious current of opinion? No, only some agitators by profession created an artificial ferment. A few deputies stumped the provinces, harangued the faithful, and gave them the password. It is to the cry of "Vive la Réforme!" that arms were taken up and the country set in commotion. But the country was not with the agitators; she suffered them, and watched from the first hour of their sway for the means to throw off their yoke. Again, who in 1870 asked for the overthrow of the Empire? What sentiments other than those of ambition and hatred guided the revolutionaries on that mournful day?

On the other hand, let us look at the grand spectacle of the 2nd December. It is an immense current from the nation herself that pushes the Prince to have done with the bastard institutions

decked out with the name of Republican Constitution, which guaranteed neither security for the present nor stability for the future. It is more than two millions of Frenchmen who, through the lawful mode of petition, make known their aspirations; it is, in fact, a considerable number of the municipal councils, councils-general; in one word, the whole of the country, who within permissible limits summon the Prince to act.

Let no one try, therefore, to institute comparisons: 1830, 1848, 1870, are revolutions with the aim of spoliation; 1851 is deliverance, with the ardent co-operation of the nation.

Still, let us endeavour to show the contrast between the assumption of power by the revolution, and the use the Prince makes of his victory and his strength on the ~~mor~~row of the 2nd December.

In 1830, 1848, 1870, what did the revolutionaries of all ranks do to at least attempt the consecration of their usurpation? Did they consult the country? Did they ask her to ratify their victory, whether she wished to give them her confidence? They were very careful not to expose themselves to such a proof, whatever the power they may have expected from it. No, they declared themselves the sovereign masters, in order to shield the power more

thoroughly from all attempt at being claimed by others.

In 1830, the Republicans, the real victors of the July days, struck with the discredit they meet with on the very morrow of their triumph, renounce the proclaiming of the Republic, and improvise a royalty on which they impose, at the beginning, their guardianship. Why, then, this confiscation of the constituent power? Why deliberate and enact among a few, instead of acting in the open day, instead of consulting the people whose sovereignty is being incessantly proclaimed? Why treat as suspect this people in whose name they pretended to act? We have said it. They feared the people's answer.

And in 1848! When those same Republicans of 1830, evicted from the grandeur they had dreamt of, overthrow the throne they had set up, and proclaim this time the Republic as the form of government claimed by the nation, why do they barricade themselves at the Hôtel de Ville, why do they arrogate themselves, to the number of ten or twelve, the constituent power? It is because they feel once more that the Revolution of 1848 is scouted by the country, and that the nation, if she had been consulted, would with an immense majority have condemned this impudent purloining of the

public power. Instead of asking the country to elect an Assembly, which after all is but an indirect and far from conclusive method of consulting the country, why did not they put the question to the country with regard to the form of government?

Perhaps it would be said to-day that at the dates of 1830 and 1848 the process of consulting the "sovereignty of the nation" was not in the habits of France. But had not the first Empire given the example of it? Had not, in 1800 and 1804, Napoleon addressed himself direct to the nation, and was it not to her that he owed the Consulate first, the Imperial dignity afterwards?

But could the same excuse be invoked in 1870? Had not the plébiscite become an institution of the country as it were? Had not in 1851, in 1852, in 1870, the Chief of the State directly appealed to the country, charging her to pronounce on her destinies? Why, when this national sovereignty was taken as the deceptive signboard, why refuse it all intervention in the creating of a new régime? Why, like in 1830 and in 1848, be shut up in this same Hôtel de Ville, to proclaim, though a minority of an Assembly without constituent power, the deposition of a dynasty arising from eight millions of suffrages? Who gave this

minority without a power the power to proclaim the Republic? And why, if it did think for one moment that such was the preference of the country, why did not this minority call upon the country to ratify the Republic by her suffrages? There is still but one and the self-same answer: it was but too well known that the country dreaded the Republic as a terrible calamity; it was well known that, notwithstanding the reverses of the war, the people would still have manifested their will to preserve the Empire; and once more was unrolled before our eyes this melancholy spectacle of a few revolutionaries, of a few parvenus without authority, imposing upon France the Government of their fancy, and the fancy of their autocracy.

Therefore be it said once for all that neither in 1830, nor in 1848, nor in 1870, the revolutionaries, when they had the power in their hands, dared to consult the nation directly and expressly with regard to the ratifying of their usurpations.

What, on the contrary, did we do on the morrow of the 2nd December.

It is in the name of the country that the Prince had acted. It is the country whom he took to be his judge, and on the 21st December the whole of France, gathered in her constituencies, hailed her deliverer with seven millions and a half of suf-



frages. All assertions to the contrary, France associated herself fully and actively with the *Coup d'État* by voting thus; she bestowed upon it its legitimacy. Let us sum up the causes of the 2nd December, and to maintain once more this series of irrefutable truths.

In 1851, alarm prevails everywhere, the country is in distress. Paris is threatened with revolt, the provinces with the *Jacquerie*; a conspiracy aims at both the power and the liberty of the Chief of the State. On the refusal of the Assembly to open a legal issue to the complications of the future, France, taking revision for her banner, summons the Prince to make an end of those complications. The Prince obeys, and on the 2nd December he restores to the country the care of her own destinies. The country, with one unanimous impulse, acclaims her saviour, and on the remains of a legal system that led her to ruin, she founds a new legal system: the Constitution of 1852.

This is what history will say.

THE END.